

IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES BY EMPOWERING AND ENHANCING THE VALUE OF TEACHER AIDES

Ten recommendations to achieve excellence in
Education Support

An International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship

SHEREE CHEVALIER

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1. Acknowledgements

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2. Executive Summary

Sheree Chevalier's Fellowship aimed to develop opportunities within the VET sector to assist Victoria to produce excellent Teacher Aide (TA) staff, and thereby reduce the impact of disadvantage. The Fellowship focussed on Education Support staff who are employed in the student/teacher support area. The Fellow explored global TA best practice, where TAs support vulnerable students, as directed by the teacher, to improve student outcomes.

Chevalier is a teacher, having taught for over twelve years in Government schools in both Africa and Australia. She worked as a trainer and assessor of the national training package qualifications Certificates III CHC30213 and IV CHC40213 in Education Support. Qualifications are not compulsory for TA staff working in schools in Australia.

Part of the Fellow's role as an assessor is to observe TA students working in the classroom with students and teachers. As the Fellow observed and reflected on her own classroom teaching experience, gaps and questions started to emerge. There were communication issues between leadership/teachers and TA staff and TAs and teachers faced ongoing challenges with student behaviour and lack of knowledge about students with a disability. This led to a number of questions including; Do teachers and TA's really understand each other's job roles? Do they collaborate about strategies on how to deal with student behavior, and if so, when?

With the notion that some TA's are undervalued and under resourced, the Fellow was of the belief that learning global best practice pertaining to TAs was an opportunity to assist DET reach Education State Targets.¹ Teacher Aides can 'promote excellence across the curriculum, support the health and wellbeing of students and help break the link between disadvantage and student outcomes.'²

Chevalier summarised her reflections and created the following four questions to pose to education representatives from other countries:

1. Are qualifications for TAs necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to TAs when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with TAs?
4. How does your country provide professional development to TAs?

The Fellow aimed to get information from as many countries as possible. She researched international conferences where key education representatives from many countries would attend so she could get a global perspective. She selected two conferences, presented at them and networked with key global industry leaders.

1 Education State Targets Accessed 27.01.2020 <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/targets.aspx>

2 <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/vision.aspx>

Overall the Fellow learnt there are inconsistencies globally, and that no country appears to have all the answers. However, the UK is a prominent research leader in this Fellowship field and is establishing good practice to improve collaborative practice in schools which is anticipated to improve student outcomes. Chevalier summarised her learnings and has linked them to ten recommendations for DET to achieve excellence in Education Support.

3. Fellowship Background

Fellowship Context

An estimated 90,500 Teacher Aides (TAs) are employed in school settings in Australia.³ Around 10,700 of these are employed in Victoria, which represents a significant financial investment by the Department of Education (DET). This Fellowship's focus is on the Education Support staff known as TAs, who assist and support teachers and students in classrooms where students may have intellectual, physical, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is not compulsory for TAs to have any qualifications to work in Australian schools. Therefore, some lack training, which may impact the learning of vulnerable students. Many parents presume/expect TAs have professional knowledge / training / qualifications.

Fellowship Methodology

The Fellowship was conducted by collaborating and researching current trends in Australia, presenting at two International conferences, online communications, meetings and workplace immersion.

Prior to travelling, the Fellow collaborated with Australian Teacher Aide (ATA),⁴ who provide PD to TAs in Australian schools. ATA shared appropriate results and data with the Fellow to enhance her understandings and confirm her assumptions.

During international travel the Fellow participated in the following:

- » Structured professional discussions:
 - » Interviewed the UK Teacher of the year, Francesca Bennett and her nominating Head Teacher from Chiltern Wood Primary School
 - » Visited a UK teacher training academy - Chepping View Primary Academy
 - » Interviewed TA staff with various qualifications, experience and responsibilities from Priory School, Slough UK who support disadvantaged children from housing estates
 - » Visited the Snowflake School in London, an independent school which specialises in ASD
 - » Met with UK Research Fellow, Sally Franklin, who leads the Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) project in London, UK
 - » Communicated with the Singapore Ministry of Education via email concerning best practice
 - » Visited the Catherine Hall Special Education School in Montego Bay, Jamaica

3 Job Outlook 'Education Aides', ANZSCO ID 4221. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from <https://joboutlook.gov.au/occupation.aspx?code=4221>

4 Australian Teacher Aide. Accessed 8 May 2019. <https://www.australianteacheraide.com.au>

- » Presented and networked at the following International Conferences:
 - » Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) in Jamaica. Conference theme: “Inclusion for All in a Changing World”
 - » EDULEARN19 in Spain

Fellowship Period

The travel period was June and July 2019.

Fellow’s Biography

Sheree Chevalier taught in secondary schools in Victoria for over ten years, working as a Community Development Leader (Acting Leading Teacher), Assistant VCAL Coordinator, Year 11 student adviser, music, classroom, pathways and humanities teacher.

Chevalier was an Australian Volunteer Abroad and taught English in Swaziland, Africa. She received an Australian Government Award for ‘making a valid contribution towards assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable improvement’.

The Fellowship links with Chevalier’s education industry expertise. In 2019 she worked at Federation University Australia as a:

- » Trainer and Assessor of the Certificate III CHC30213 and IV CHC40213 Education Support training packages.
- » Teacher Aide – following the instructions of an engineering teacher to provide support to students to achieve required outcomes
- » Classroom teacher – VCAL students

Chevalier is employed by VCAA as a VCE VET Music Performance assessor and an Arts Assessor for the Education State Arts assessment program. She also has over ten years of experience as a consultant, manager and trainer in the Travel Industry.

Abbreviations / Acronyms / Definitions

Acronym	Definition
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AE	Allied Educator
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ATA	Australian Teacher Aide
DET	Department of Education and Training
DISS	The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff
DISES	Division of International Special Education and Services
ES	Education Support
HLTA	Higher Level Teacher Assistant
LBWR	Leadership of Ballarat and Western Region
MITA	Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants Project
NESA	NSW Education Standards Authority
NSW	New South Wales

PD	Professional Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SEN	Special Education Needs
SSA	Senior Support Assistant
TA	Teacher Aide/Teacher Assistant
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UK	United Kingdom
VAEAI	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching

4. Fellowship Learnings

Fellowship Learnings Pre-Overseas Travel

Within the area of Education Support, TAs are in demand. There were 90,500 jobs in 2018 with an anticipated rise to 109,300 by 2023.⁵ Due to the expected growth, the Australian Government offered free TAFE Certificate III CHC30213 and IV CHC40213 Education Support courses in 2019 to create supply for the anticipated demand.

Many TAs work with students who are diverse and/or have disabilities. Victoria is working towards being an inclusive Education State and over recent years implemented the following policies and processes:

- » Teachers must declare to VIT that they have undertaken relevant training/PD to teach learners with a disability to retain their registration status.⁶
- » Student teachers now learn how to teach students with special needs/disabilities as part of their University course.⁷
- » VCAA now has a curriculum for students with disabilities called 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum A-D'.⁸

- » DET works with VAEAI to promote education as a lifelong process, and to support this, developed 'The Marrung; Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026'.⁹

Australian Teacher Aide - Data Collection (see Appendix A)

The results from the ATA surveys and polls showed:

Qualifications - Certificate III (any learning area) was the highest qualification of Australian TAs surveyed.

Behaviour - Responses indicated that knowledge about student behaviour is essential to Australian TA's performing their job. TA's indicated the need to obtain strategies to deal with challenging behaviour.

Teachers and TA - Roles and collaboration

- » Many TAs stated they did not see lesson plans, so the learning intentions were unclear
- » Leadership does not allow time for teachers and TAs to meet

5 Job Outlook <https://joboutlook.gov.au/occupation?code=4221>

6 Victorian Institute of Teaching, 'Special needs PD update'. 16 March 2017. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/news/news/2017/special-needs-pd-update>

7 Victorian Institute of Teaching, 'Special Needs Plan: How does this apply to the next generation of teachers?' Accessed 11 May 2109. Retrieved from <https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/special-needs-plan>

8 Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum', VCAA Bulletin. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/correspondence/bulletins/2016/May/_maylead.aspx

9 G. Atkinson. 'Introduction: Marrung Aboriginal education plan 2016 – 2026, p4. July 2016. Accessed 8 May 2019. retrieved from https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/aboriginal/Marrung_Aboriginal_Education_Plan_2016-2026.pdf

» Many teachers said they didn't know how to work with TA's

Red Light: Nearly a quarter (22%) of TA's were left to prepare class lessons. This is concerning because the role of the TA is specifically not to teach and/or plan full classes.¹⁰ TAs are not qualified to teach and it is an offence under the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) for anyone to undertake the duties of a teacher in a Victorian school. The achievement of successful outcomes for students is at risk.

Global Fellowship Learnings

The Fellow asked the following four questions to Teacher Aides, Head Teachers and educational specialists to explore best global practice:

1. Are qualifications for TAs necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to TAs when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with TAs?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to TAs?

Singapore Learnings

Singapore has a different support structure to Australia. It appears they do not have TAs but have ES staff called Allied Educators (AE) who specialise in three areas:

1. Learning and Behaviour Support - provides learning and behavioural support to students with mild special needs like ASD, Dyslexia and ADHD
2. School Counsellor – supports social and emotional wellbeing of students
3. Student Welfare Officer who provides social support to students at risk

A minimal tertiary qualification is required to work as an AE in Singapore. AE's consult and build the capacity of teachers and other school personnel on learning and behavioural support for students who have special needs. AE's have their own personalised PD plan which is regularly monitored.

In summary, Singapore regulates the qualifications of their AE staff, offer ongoing professional development in all areas including behavioural issues and promote AE's as leaders in their schooling system.

United Kingdom Learnings

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) Project

The Fellow met with Sally Franklin, Senior Teaching Fellow of the MITA¹¹ project at the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education in London. MITA provides school improvement and training services based on their research. They provide consultancy, and run PD for school leaders, teachers and TAs to help TAs thrive in their role and contribute to improved outcomes for pupils.¹²

Franklin confirmed that no set qualifications are required for TA's to work in the UK. A large majority of primary schools have a TA in every classroom, but this

10 State Government of Victoria Australia, "Human Resources, Dimension of Work: Education Support Class", last updated 22 August 2017. Accessed 8 May 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/dimensSSO.aspx>

11 'Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants'. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/>

12 Sharples, Jonathon., Webster, Rob., Blatchford, Peter., 'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants: Guidance Report'. Accessed 9 May 2019. Retrieved from https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Teaching_Assistants/TA_Guidance_Report_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable.pdf

fluctuates in relation to funding. The UK are in crises as there are not enough specialist schools to deal with students who are in need.

Franklin referred to her research project entitled The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) which initially showed ‘the more support students received from TAs; the less academic progress was made over a school year’.¹³ Many TA’s felt they were not prepared for the day and could not talk to class teachers and felt as though they go in ‘blind’. TA’s just have to ‘get on with it’. In the past many TA’s had completed student work themselves because they felt their worth (and employment) was tainted if the student they were working with did not complete the work as directed by the teacher. Franklin stated, ‘students need to learn the skills of planning, problem solving and reflecting. Task completion is important, but the process of working on the task are the skills that are needed in life’. The reason why classrooms are assigned TAs is so they can support students and give them the skills to be as independent as possible.

Further DISS research revealed the decisions made about TAs by school leaders and teachers hindered successful student progress and outcomes. ‘The way schools and teachers deploy and prepare TAs’¹⁴ were the reason why the more support students received from TAs; the less academic progress was made.

Franklin urged that school leaders need to ‘back up’ TA’s and create a ‘whole school’ initiative, which also means encouraging and training teachers to make time for collaboration. A key finding is that TA’s help ease workload and stress, reduce classroom disruption and allow teachers more time to teach.¹⁵ Franklin is

keen for TAs to be in every class in primary school, or for two classes to share an assistant.

The UK advise schools:

1. ‘TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low attaining pupils
2. Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
3. Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
4. Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom
5. Use TAs to deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions
6. Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction
7. Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions’.¹⁶

Franklin was impressed that Australia has a textbook, ‘Supporting Education’ by Karen Kearns¹⁷ for students studying the Certificate III CHC30213 Education

13 ‘Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants’. Accessed 31 January 2010. Retrieved from <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research.php>

14 ‘Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants’. Accessed 31 January 2010. Retrieved from <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research.php>

15 Sharples, Jonathon., Webster, Rob., Blatchford, Peter., ‘Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants: Guidance Report’. Accessed 9 May 2019. Retrieved from https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Teaching_Assistants/TA_Guidance_Report_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable.pdf

16 ‘Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants’. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/>

17 Kearns, Karen. ‘Supporting Education’ Third edition, Published: 02/07/2019 by Cengage Learning Australia, ISBN 9780170419642 [https://cengage.com.au/product/title/supporting-education/isbn/9780170419642](https://cengage.com.au/product/title/supporting-education/isbn/9780170419642?OLDEDITION/title/supporting-education/isbn/9780170364379) <https://cengage.com.au/product/title/supporting-education/isbn/9780170364379>

Support course. She indicated Australia has the potential to be leaders in this field of research and welcomed collaboration.

The difference between the UK and Australian system is that UK Teaching Assistants are employed to assist in the classroom and follow the directions of the classroom teacher/s. Australian TA's are employed to assist identified students who require support, under the direction of the classroom teacher. Australian TAs work directly with students to improve student learning outcomes whilst UK TAs assist the teacher to manage classrooms.

Red Light: The ironic similarity is that neither the UK nor Australia require 'education support' staff to have educational qualifications so they can 'support education'.



Sally Franklin and Fellow at the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education in London

Interview learnings from the UK

The Fellow conducted professional discussions with a mixture of TAs, senior TAs and Head Teachers in a variety of UK educational institutions. She asked the four research questions and her learnings are summarised below:

UK TA qualifications and role structure

- » TA's, in the classroom, are often utilised to support the teacher, for example administration duties and photocopying, but many schools are moving towards TA's supporting students.
- » Some schools are moving away from parent helpers volunteering and then employing them. They are moving towards employing TAs for their experience and/or qualifications.
- » TAs have levels. A Senior Support Assistant (SSA) can plan and teach classes for the teacher for half a day and a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) can cover classes if the teacher is absent. Extra payment is received to plan and teach. Recognition is received by the status of job title if you cover classes.
- » TA's, with any degree, can apply to get a salaried traineeship and study to be teachers. There was an indication that TA's with a certain amount of experience may be sponsored by their school to train to be qualified teachers.

UK Behaviour

Discussions revealed the knowledge of how to deal with student behavioural challenges is vital to TAs achieving success. In the UK there is an increase in students with Special Education Needs (SEN). Some SEN students do not have the skills/vocabulary to explain their feelings/thoughts when frustrated with learning, so their behaviour changes and often is very challenging. Behaviour is their way of communication. A whole school behavior focus is required with two policies provided – a policy for students with the rules and another for staff with the procedures.

UK Teacher and TAs

- » Some experienced TAs believe teacher's lack knowledge regarding students with SEN and suggested teachers be trained
- » Time – Some TAs volunteer their time to meet with teachers to receive instructions for the day. Other schools, with a whole-school approach, timetable 30 minutes before the first class to discuss the plan for the day and 30 minutes at the end of the day for updates, feedback and reflection.

UK PD

- » In-house PD for teachers and TAs is often 1 hour a week at many schools
- » Teachers and TAs need continual training, especially in ASD, due to the increase in students with ASD
- » The TA Induction is carefully planned, and PD based
- » TAs have regular reviews with school leaders.

UK Other

- » There appeared to be inconsistent policies and procedures because schools are managed under diverse governance arrangements
- » TA wellbeing – TAs deal with social and emotional issues that students face. Some schools focus on strategies to deal with stress
- » Schools are encouraged to nominate TAs as 'TA of the Year.'

Key learnings from the UK that influenced Fellow recommendations:

- » Induction is vital to TA success. Allow TAs to shadow experienced TAs to learn how schools operate and how to work with students with special needs
- » Timetable collaboration time for TAs and teachers to discuss learning plans for students

- » Create career pathways for experienced TAs
- » Recognise and assist with TA wellbeing, especially mental health
- » Adopt a similar process to MITA. Encourage PD so teachers and leaders know how to work with TAs
- » Encourage the development of whole-school policies and PD on behaviour management for teachers and TAs
- » Promote Professional Standards for TAs, this assists with job role clarity
- » Remind TAs their job is to support students so students can work towards independence
- » Train leadership to promote and develop whole-school collaboration



Francesca Bennett the UK Teacher Assistant of 2018 and Fellow dancing with students

Conferences

The Fellow presented the following papers at two International conferences:

- » 'Training staff to support inclusion' - DISES Conference - PowerPoint presentation (Appendix B)
- » 'Training staff to support successful outcomes for students – An Australian Education Support Project.' EDULEARN19 Conference Paper (Appendix C)

Participants from at least sixteen countries attended her presentations and her EDULEARN19 publication is accessible in over 80 countries.



DISES Conference. Fellow with DISES President, Mark C. Francis and Executive Director, Dr Alice Farling

DISES Conference and EDULEARN19 learnings

The DISES Conference was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica and EDULEARN19 was held in Palma, Spain. Participants who attended the Fellow's presentation represented Jamaica, various states of America, St Lucia, Barbados, Turks and Caicos Islands, Suriname, Brazil, Colombia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Italy, Spain, South Korea, New Zealand and South Africa.

Key conference learnings:

- » Parents expect/presume TAs are qualified
- » Many education leaders were surprised qualifications are not required for TAs in Australia
- » Many countries do require qualifications - the minimum is a pass at High School level and two years at College- Associate degree
- » In Jamaica, TAs are employed by the Ministry of Education who train/induct TAs before they enter classrooms. Teachers are instructed on how to work with TA's and update the Ministry of the TA progress
- » PD is done in-house in many countries
- » Many educators had not thought about the role of TAs
- » Communication is a problem between teachers and TAs mainly due to time constraints
- » TAs do not require registration
- » An American based company is endorsed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) to provide professional development to TAs and teachers in New South Wales.¹⁸

Red Light: It was evident many countries had not focussed on the issues covered in this Fellowship.

Summary of key learnings from conferences that influenced Fellow recommendations:

- » Most countries require TAs to have a minimum qualification
- » PD is facilitated within the schools collaboratively. Some countries have structure, some do not
- » Some countries, such as Jamaica, train TAs before they enter the classroom
- » No country identified with compulsory TA registration, we could be leaders in this area and professionalise the TA role and responsibilities
- » Parents expect TAs to have qualifications. Their children have special needs and they expect the school is providing their children with professional assistance.

Fellow at the EDULEARN19 Conference





Catherine Hall Special Education School, Montego Bay, Jamaica

Fellowship Learnings Post Overseas Travel

- » Since returning from overseas the Fellow participated in a SKILLSIQ webinar to review the Draft 2 suggested changes for Training Packages CHC30219 Certificate III and CHC40219 Certificate IV in Education Support. She actively posted suggestions for the CHCSS00058 - Education support work skill set (Release 3) which is currently under review. This skill set is endorsed by industry and provides the skills for commencing work as a teacher's aide in an education support context.¹⁹ The Fellow is of the belief this skill set is currently underutilised.
- » Australia is becoming more aware of UK research. Some schools and ATA are starting to work towards improving collaboration processes.²⁰
- » TAFE Victoria will continue to provide Certificate III and Certificate IV in Education Support as a free course in 2020 with capped numbers.

¹⁹ <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCSS00058>

²⁰ Bell, M. & Liliendal, S. Module 4: 'How to Give Feedback to Teachers', to be published online by Australian Teacher Aide, June 2019 <https://www.australianteacheraide.com.au>

5. Personal, Professional and Sectoral Impact

The Fellow was invigorated by meeting other like-minded people who had a passion for supporting vulnerable students to engage in learning. She was stimulated with the professional discussions, inspired by attempts to establish global best practice and is confident Victoria, the Education State, can be amongst the leaders in this field.

If TAs are qualified, registered, supported and their role and responsibilities clarified, Victorian schools and the wider community will benefit. The Fellow envisages School Principals will have a high functioning school with improved learning outcomes and higher student retention rates. Teachers will be less stressed, have less student behavioural issues in class and the opportunity to teach more curriculum. Students will feel more connected to school, learn, have increased confidence and the ability to contribute to society. Parents will be confident their children are learning from qualified staff. TAs will be qualified, confident and have professional career pathways and PD opportunities. The wider/extended community will benefit by having a more inclusive society.

The Fellow's confidence, on a professional level, has significantly increased as a result of being awarded the Fellowship. She has taken advantage of opportunities to step outside her comfort zone, write abstracts, a paper and present at 2 international conferences. She believes the Fellowship has increased her capacity as a teacher and trainer.

The Fellow looks forward to sharing her insights via written articles, through engagement with industry partners and through speaking engagements. She was recently a panelist for a webinar hosted by ATA who have Australia wide connections and an extensive database.



Fellow presenting at the DISES Conference

6. Recommendations

Based on her learnings, the Fellow prepared ten recommendations, for DET to consider, to achieve excellence in Education Support and improve student learning outcomes by empowering and enhancing the value of Teacher Aides.

The recommendations were presented in a free community webinar on 19 November 2019, entitled 'Teacher Aides Around the Globe: What we can learn from other countries,' hosted by Australian Teacher Aide (Appendix D). Over 56 participants attended the webinar and stayed for the full duration: 93% were TAs, 2% were Education Support trainers and 5% identified as 'other'. Participants were asked questions relevant to each recommendation and they responded via live polling.

DET representatives viewed the recorded webinar and met with the Fellow in early December 2019 for further discussion. The Fellow followed up this meeting by providing further insight regarding the recommendations and emailed DET a presentation for further clarity and consideration (Appendix E).

Below are the ten recommendations and webinar poll response statistics which confirm the Fellow's ten recommendations as being vital areas to consider:

1. Establish compulsory industry endorsed qualifications for TAs to work in schools

- » Most countries require a minimum qualification for TAs to work in schools
- » Many parents presume TAs have qualifications
- » Education Support is a growth area in Australia. Free 2020 TAFE courses for Education Support Certificates III and IV (17 units each)

- » Education support work skill set (5 units) is endorsed by industry. Intended for commencing work as a teacher's aide but is underutilised
- » Existing TA staff apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to gain qualifications
- » Current Education Support packages and skill set is under review by SkillsIQ

Poll Question: Should TAs employed in Australian schools possess a minimum qualification?

Response: Yes 87%, No 4%, Unsure 9%

2. Establish a Registration body for TAs working in Victoria, including Professional Standards

- » Regulate who is working with children in schools - qualified and suitable to work with students.
- » Track Working with Children Check (WWCC) registration and renewal
- » PD can be logged and tracked
- » Professional Standards will clarify the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required to be TAs
- » No other country identified as having a Registration body for TAs

Poll Question: Do TAs need to be registered?

Response: Yes 72 %, No 13%, Unsure 15%

3. Clarify the TA job description. Reconsider the title, role, responsibilities with the aim to support students who are working towards independence

- » Include in the job description the role of the TA is to support student learning so the student can work towards independence
- » Professional standards will assist with the expectations of the role and responsibilities
- » Title to reflect connection to student

Poll Question: Does your job description reflect your TA role?

Response: Yes 11%, No 84%, Unsure 5%

Poll Question: Should there be one title for TAs in Australia?

Response: Yes 69%, No 14%, Unsure 17%

4. Recognise the wellbeing of TAs is of high importance

Vulnerable/disadvantaged students, that TAs work with, may have behavioural issues. TAs can be spat on, hit, punched, scratched, kicked and verbally abused.

To support health and wellbeing, leadership could:

- » offer strategic support e.g. time out
- » advise coping strategies
- » train TAs and equip them with coping strategies before they enter the classroom

As a way of understanding the student cohort, it will benefit TAs if they are strategically inducted into the classroom environment. This could be done by shadowing experienced TAs.

Poll Question: Are TAs inducted in safety, mental health and wellbeing at your school?

Response: Yes 30%, No 64%, Unsure 6%

5. Provide progressive pathways and awards for TAs

- » Promote - Offer regional senior specialist positions in behaviour management, well-being, literacy and numeracy
- » Traineeships – Offer school-based traineeships for TAs. Train to be Education Support Trainers and/or classroom teachers
- » Awards
 - » Victorian Department of Education awards for TAs (various categories)
 - » Promote Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards

Poll Question: Is a career pathway important for TAs?

Response: Yes 89%, No 0%, Unsure 11%

6. Train TAs to work more collaboratively with teachers and school leadership

- » Provide a clear fair process for TAs to follow if an instructed task is not part of their job description (e.g. plan classes - duty of care concern)
- » TAs to be aware of the Professional Standards for teachers
- » Provide a Professional Standard for TAs with advice on how to work with teachers and leadership

Poll Question: Do TAs understand the role and responsibilities of classroom teachers?

Response: Yes 68%, No 20%, Unsure 12%

7. Provide regular training for teachers and TAs on disability and student behaviour management

- » Many teachers in Victoria have minimal formal training on disability and behaviour management
- » To retain registrations, Victorian teachers are required to undertake disability related PD. It should be the same for TAs
- » Both teachers and TAs need frequent training on how to manage student behaviour.
- » If behaviour is communication, we need to understand the language

Poll Question: Do you receive regular PD, relevant to your role, such as working with students with disability, and managing behaviour?

Response: Yes 23%, No 66%, Unsure 11%

8. Train teachers about the role and responsibilities of TAs and how to instruct TAs

- » Many teachers in Victoria do not know that the TA Dimensions of Work stipulate the 'TA must follow the instructions of the teacher'. This should be advised to all teachers and be in the teacher's job description/standards.
- » To avoid confusion and litigation, teachers need to know the TA's job role and responsibilities. The role of the TA is to support the student to be as independent as possible.
- » Train teachers on how to provide clear instructions. For example, instructing a TA to 'work with' a student does not give enough direction and is open to interpretation

- » Train teachers to share Lesson Plans so the TA is aware of the desired Learning Outcomes.

Poll Question: Do you think teachers understand the role and responsibilities of TAs?

Response: Yes 23%, No 70%, Unsure 7%

9. Train school leaders to promote collaboration between teachers and TAs

School leaders could:

- » Timetable collaboration time
- » Alternate the teacher and TA working with students with special needs
- » Plan TA inductions which include training
- » Encourage TA's to conduct in-house PD for all staff
- » Encourage regular contributions by TAs in staff meetings

Poll Question: Do your school leaders provide teachers and TAs time to collaborate about student learning?

Response: Yes 5%, No 86%, Unsure 9%

10. Promote change and 'whole school collaboration'

- » Further research, interviews and surveys should be conducted in Victoria to capture reality and confirm assumptions
- » School consultation/whole-school collaboration and professional development for all could assist in achieving the Victorian Education State targets and to improve student outcomes²¹

Poll Question: At your school, do teachers and teacher aides participate in professional development together?

Response: Yes 36%, No 50%, Unsure 14%

Poll Question: Do you think further research about TAs should be done in Australia?

Response: Yes 95%, No 2%, Unsure 3%



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8. Appendices

Appendix A

Australian Teacher Aide - Data Collection

The ATA research data includes the results from a recent survey, Help Shape the Future of Teacher Aide Training. The survey results were published by Australian Teacher Aide in March 2019. ATA collated the survey responses from 285 people: 235 Teacher Aides, 19 Education Support Trainers, 10 Teachers, 5 School Leaders and 16 Others who identified mostly as education support students, volunteers and administrators as well as teacher aides with specialist roles. Most participants in the survey were from the Primary and Secondary sector. 146 had between 2-10 years' experience, and 100 had over 10 years' experience.

Survey Results

Table 1. Please select your highest qualification

No qualifications	13
Certificate I or II	5
Certificate III	92
Certificate IV	80
Diploma or Higher	95

Table 2. Which of these skills and knowledge are essential to Teacher Aides performing their job? (numerous responses permitted)

Administration	100
Behaviour	263
Disability and Additional Needs	264
Information Technology	179
Teaching and Learning	253

Table 3. How much of the working week do Teacher Aides spend providing social and emotional support?

Most of their time	147
Some of their time	127
Occasionally	11

Table 4. What amount of time do Teacher Aides spend supporting students with learning?

Most of their time	270
Some of their time	15

Poll Results - Teaching Assistants and Teachers working together

ATA also conducted a series of live polls to learn more about how Teacher Aides (TA's) viewed their support role. The results of these polls were released in June 2017, as an online video entitled 'A Collaborative Framework for Student Success'. The poll results were collected from 24 TAs from four different states in Australia, who worked with Prep to Year 12 students in a range of direct education support roles.

Table 5. Lesson preparation

Most of the teachers I support always make sure:	
I am prepared for a lesson	39%
sometimes make sure I am prepared for a lesson	39%
usually leave it to me to prepare for a lesson.	22%

Table 6. Time to practice a new task

Most of the students I support get:	
sufficient time to practice a new task	53%
limited time to practice a new task	47%
no time. to practice a new task	0%

Table 7. Time to hear about student prior knowledge

How much time do your students get to talk about what they already know about a task?	
Students get sufficient time	40%
Students got limited time	50%

Students get no time at all	10%
-----------------------------	-----

ATA also collected anecdotal data from teachers and teacher aides which indicated:

- » Many teachers said they didn't know how to work with TA's.
- » TAs reported that they:
 - » lacked knowledge of curriculum.
 - » sometimes had little idea what students were learning, and 'winged' it (Australian slang for improvise).
 - » had little time to prepare or communicate with teachers
 - » were not given a lesson outline.

Appendix B

'Training staff to support inclusion' - DISES Conference

-PowerPoint presentation

Training staff to support inclusion

Presenter: Sheree Chevalier





1

Introduction G'day from Sheree
shereechevalier@gmail.com



Focus:
 Education Support - Teaching Assistants (TA)
 Their job role is to:

- Assist teachers
- Follow routine tasks instructed by the teacher
- Follow school policies and procedures
- Do NOT teach and/or plan full classes.
- Responsibility of the student is with the teacher

2

Context - Fellowship's Aim

Learn from other countries



1. **Education/qualifications of Teaching Assistants TA**
2. **Behaviour support?**
3. **Teachers and TA's working together?**
4. **TA's Professional Development?**

3

Context

- **Australia**
 - Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking 2015-2016 #21



- Growth area for Teaching Assistant's (TA) – free courses

Learnt so far

- **United Kingdom**

Research:

 - seven recommendations for best practice
 - Projects - Maximising the Impact of TA's (MITA)
 - Professional Standards for TA's
- **Singapore**
 - TA's Tertiary qualified
 - Specialists in Behaviour
 - Professional Development provided
 - Leaders - advise teachers/s
 - PISA 2015-2016



4

Methodology -

- Australia's recent changes to include students with special needs: teacher training, student teachers, curriculum, Aboriginal education plan
- Observations - Formulated questions
 1. Education/qualifications of Teaching Assistants (TA)?
 2. How should we support TA's when dealing with student behaviour?
 3. How can we improve on teachers and TA's working together?
 4. TA's Professional Development?
- Australian Teacher Aide (ATA) Data Collection
 - Survey 285 participants
 - Live Polls 24 Teaching Assistants



5

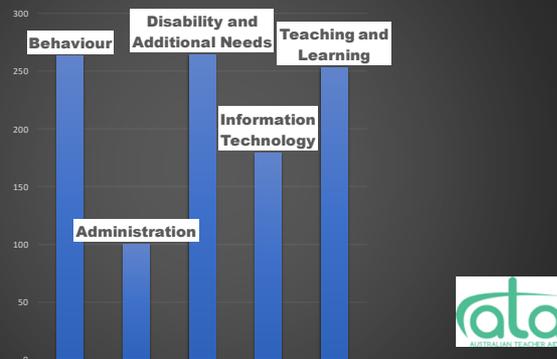
Survey Results indicate TA's:



- Education level – Cert III or above
- Provide social and emotion support
- 94% spend most of their time supporting students with learning and.....

6

Essential skills/knowledge for TA's to perform their job



7

ATA Anecdotal Data



- Teachers - Many teachers not sure how to work with TA's
- Teaching Assistants:
 - Lacked knowledge of curriculum
 - 'winged' the learning
 - Minimal time to prepare
 - No lesson outline

8

ATA Poll Results – Teaching Assistants and Teachers Working together

- Teachers give students time to practice a new task
 - sufficient time 53%
 - limited time 47%
- Teachers give TA's time to hear student's prior knowledge
 - Sufficient time 40%
 - Limited time 50%
 - No time 10%

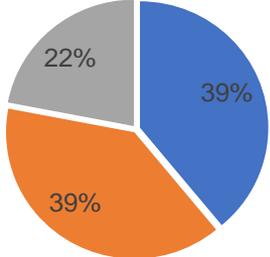
and.....



9

ATA Result – 24 Teaching Assistants (TA's) respond:

Most teachers I support always make sure:



Response	Percentage
I am prepared for a lesson	39%
Sometimes make sure I am prepared for a lesson	39%
Usually leave it to me to prepare for a lesson	22%



10

Introduction G'day from Sheree shereechevalier@gmail.com

Focus:
Education Support - Teaching Assistants (TA)

Their job role is to:

- Assist teachers
- Follow routine tasks instructed by the teacher
- Follow school policies and procedures
- Do NOT teach and/or plan full classes.**
- Responsibility of the student is with the teacher



11

Conclusions

Behaviour

- Strategies are essential

Teachers and Teacher Aides collaborating

- Time – TA's need time with teachers and students
- Lesson preparation

Australia's future

- Professional Development ATA
- Fellowship
- Your assistance



12



13

Discussion...In your country

1. Are qualifications necessary for Teaching Assistants?
2. Student Behaviour – how do you provide support?
3. How do Teachers and Teaching Assistants work well together?
4. How do you provide Professional Development/learning to Teaching Assistants?

Report back to the main group

14

See ya

Hooroo

Catch ya later



sherechevalier@gmail.com

15

Appendix C

‘Training staff to support successful outcomes for students – An Australian Education Support Project.’ EDULEARN19 Conference Paper

TRAINING STAFF TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS - AN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SUPPORT PROJECT

S. Chevalier

International Specialised Skills Institute (AUSTRALIA)

Abstract

The futures of many vulnerable students are being shaped by untrained Education Support ES staff in Australia. ES, assist and support teachers in classrooms where students may have intellectual, physical, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Worldwide, ES staff have many titles, including Teaching Assistants, Integration Aides, Allied Educators, Teacher Aides, Learning Support Officers and Inclusion Aides. Whilst a growing number of ES are employed in our classrooms it is not compulsory for ES to be qualified to work in schools in Australia.

Method/Objectives:

At EDULEARN19 I propose an interactive format to share knowledge about Education Support and promote international strategic networking. I will introduce myself and the research I have discovered as part of my Fellowship and then ask for people from varying countries to merge into groups to discuss four questions/objectives:

1. Are qualifications for Education Support ES staff necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to ES staff when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with ES staff?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to ES staff?

The small groups will then report back to identify similarities/differences.

Data Collection:

Australia has identified a need to improve the support practices for ES staff and is working towards offering ongoing Professional Development to deal with the barriers to learning they encounter daily. Australian Teacher Aide (ATA) is the peak industry organisation for education paraprofessionals in Australian schools. Their goal is to develop the capacity of all teacher aides in Australian schools by providing relevant professional development. ATA and I have agreed to work collaboratively on this critical issue. ATA have provided me with data collected during a recent feedback process and have given me permission to share these results.

I am an experienced classroom teacher, who moved into training adults on how to be Education Support ES staff in Victoria, Australia. I have observed ES staff working with students with special needs in over 45 schools and have noted they are often given minimal direction by the classroom teachers who expect ES to be behaviour specialists. ATA have conducted surveys and I will be sharing their research findings on how teachers and education support staff can collaborate to improve the outcomes for students.

Results/Conclusion:

In 2018, I travelled to the UK to learn about best practice in this area. Upon my return I was awarded an International Vocational & Education Training VET Practitioner Fellowship sponsored by the Victorian Department of Education and Training DET. This has allowed me to travel overseas in June and July 2019. I hope the interactive nature of my session from EDULEARN19 and the networking opportunities will assist with my research. I intend to report my findings back to DET in order to influence and promote potential positive change and hope other countries will be inspired by this work.

Keywords: inclusion, support, assist, training, issues,

1 INTRODUCTION

It's obvious! If education staff are trained, then successful student outcomes will increase. Why in Australia, and many other parts of the world are we neglecting to support our teacher aides (TA's)/Education Support (ES) staff who work in the classroom with teachers and students?

This paper will focus on TA staff in Victoria, Australia, who are employed to work in the student/teacher support area, and how we can improve student outcomes by empowering and enhancing the value of TAs. A summary of the existing Victorian TA role is to undertake routine tasks as instructed by the classroom teacher and follow clear policies and procedures. TA's are not to teach and/or plan full classes. The responsibility for the student remains clearly with the teacher [1].

G'day, my name is Sheree Chevalier and I have been a teacher for over twelve years in both Africa and Australia working in Government schools. For over two years I have been a trainer and assessor for national training package qualifications Certificates III CHC30213 and IV CHC40213 in Education Support, working for Registered Training Organisations (RTO) in Victoria, Australia. Training packages are developed to meet the training needs of an industry and specify the skills and

knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace [2]. The packages are taught in the Vocational Education Training (VET) sector. Qualifications are not compulsory for TA staff working in schools in Australia

Part of the role as an assessor for these Certificates is to observe TA students working in the classroom with students and teachers and paid TA staff. I noted gaps when I compared the role of the teacher and the role of the TA in the classroom. Briefly, it is not compulsory for TA staff to be trained: there are communication issues between teachers and TA staff, and TA face ongoing challenges with student behaviour without the training to effectively manage this.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) in partnership with the International Special Skills Institute (ISSI) offer overseas Fellowships and I was inspired to research the role of TA staff further and apply for their International VET Practitioner Fellowship [3]. The aim of my work is to develop opportunities within the VET sector to assist Victoria to produce excellent TA staff, and thereby reduce the impact of disadvantage.

As a recipient of the 2018 International VET Practitioner Fellowship, I will focus this paper on the role of Education Support/Teaching Aide staff internationally by exploring whether TA staff are required to have qualifications. Whether they are provided support on managing student behaviour. How and by whom teachers are advised to work with TA's and how TA ongoing professional development needs are monitored and addressed.

This paper has been developed in collaboration with Australian Teacher Aide (ATA) [4], the peak industry organisation for education paraprofessionals in Australian schools since 2015. ATA provides professional development customised to teacher aides in Australian schools, that is designed to improve teacher and teacher aide collaboration and support practices that lead to more successful outcomes for students.

Under this Fellowship, I will research how other countries are achieving excellence in the growth area of education support, focussing on TA staff who assist in the classroom. This is a current Australian Education Support research project, still in progress, which welcomes input from your country to promote positive change.

Context

Australia

Australia is often described as a vast country and is well known for the Sydney Opera House, beaches, friendly people, unique wildlife and Uluru (also known as Ayers Rock). We have over 9000 schools. Most students are enrolled in Government schools. Many schools are heavily populated, especially around coastal regions but some schools are very remote such as Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School which sits 700 kilometres/434 miles from the nearest city. Food deliveries arrive once a fortnight whilst mail is flown in on a weekly basis [5].

Schools apply to the Government for funding to pay for the salary for TA workers who are employed to assist students who have learning needs. In remote schools, which often attract many indigenous students, there are often only one or two TA's employed to assist students, with no relief staff available. In city areas, government schools may have teams of TA staff and relief staff and volunteers are readily available. Education Support, which includes TA's is a growth area in Australia.

Education Aides whom are also called ES are mainly female and the average age is 46 years. There were 90,500 jobs in 2018 with an anticipated rise to 109,300 by 2023. [6]

Australia's world ranking

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA conduct testing of 15 -year- old students from seventy nations on their scholastic performance in mathematics, science and reading. Australia had the worldwide ranking of 21 out of 70 countries in 2015-2016 [7].

Singapore

Singapore is ranked No1 on the PISA list. Singapore call their ES staff Allied Educators (AE) and this paper will concentrate on the AE area of Learning and Behavioural Support.

The AE is required to have a minimal tertiary qualification. In terms of professional development, the AE's are guided by professional learning frameworks developed by the Ministry of Education and are provided with relevant training and professional development opportunities that are relevant to their role. These include sponsored pre-service training/on-boarding, milestone training programmes, in-service courses, network learning communities and training and professional development support schemes. AE's have professional development plans which are annually discussed with supervisors and are continually monitored.

Singapore's AE's provide leadership and work with school management to review and improve school systems/processes to support students' special educational needs. AE's provide consultation to teachers and build the capacity of teachers and other school personnel on learning and behavioural support for those who have special needs [8]. On my upcoming trip to Singapore I look forward to learning how AE's engage stakeholders to identify and support students who require learning and behavioural support.

In summary, Singapore regulate the qualifications of their AE staff, offer ongoing professional development in all areas including behavioural issues and promote AE's as leaders in their schooling system. Perhaps this approach makes a significant contribution to the successful outcomes for their students?

United Kingdom

In 2018 I met Phil Naylor, Assistant Director of Blackpool Research School in the UK. The Research Schools Network is a collaboration between the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Institute for Effective Education (IEE) to create a network of schools that will support the use of evidence to improve teaching practice. Phil referred me to the EEF Guidance Report which is designed to provide practical, evidence-based guidance to help primary and secondary schools make the best use of teaching assistants (TAs). The Report contains seven recommendations, based on the latest research examining the use of TAs in classrooms. Many schools are taking onboard the suggestions and throughout the guide further training for TA's is suggested. The recommendations are:

- » 'TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low attaining pupils
- » Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
- » Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
- » Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom
- » Use TAs to deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions
- » Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction
- » Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions' [9]

In the UK another project is underway called Maximising the Impact of TAs (MITA). MITA provides school improvement and training services based on their internationally-recognised research and guidance. They provide consultancy, and run courses for school leaders, teachers and TAs to help ensure TAs thrive in their role and contribute to improved outcomes for pupils. They have been involved with producing leading national guidance on Making the Best Use of Teaching Assistants and the Professional Standards for TAs. [10]

Education International

In 2011, at the Sixth Education International World Congress, it was noted that ES personnel 'share many challenges and issues of teachers and academic staff but also face distinct problems such as lack of respect and recognition for their work' [11]. Education international (EI) is committed to supporting Education Support and continue to research and raise awareness of the vital role of ES for quality education. EI established an ES task force and in May 2018, Brussels hosted the first ever international Education Support (ES) conference.

2 METHODOLOGY

Inclusion

Our aim to have inclusive classrooms has stimulated recent changes in Victoria:

- » From 2017 teachers were required to build their capacity to teach learners with a disability and undertake relevant training/Professional Development (PD) to retain Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration. [12]
- » Student teachers now learn how to teach students with special needs/disabilities in their courses. [13]
- » The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) provides the blueprint of what should be taught in schools. In 2016-2017 a new curriculum was launched for students with disabilities called 'Towards Foundation Level

Victorian Curriculum A-D'. The VCAA are currently working on a curriculum called English as an additional language EAL [14].

- » Victoria's Department of Education works with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI) to promote education as a lifelong process. 'The Marrung; Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026 will ensure that Koorie families, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people from other parts of Australia who live in Victoria, have the doors held wide open to all learning and development services, from early childhood onwards.' [15]

Observation

I have observed adult students who are training to be TA staff and employed TA staff, working with school age students with special needs in classrooms. As a teacher in Victorian Government schools for over ten years and as a trainer of TA adult students, I have observed adult students volunteering their time in over 40 primary, secondary and specialist Victorian schools in government, private and faith-based settings. 100 to 120 hours of voluntary time is required in schools as part of the training. I observed adult TA staff/students were often given minimal and questionable directions from teachers because it is presumed TA's have prior knowledge. Student progress is at risk because TA's work with students who need the most help.

Formulated Questions

From the research and observations so far, many questions have been formulated for consideration. They include:

- » How are the appropriate numeracy and literacy levels of TA staff working in the classroom tested?
- » Do teachers really know what the role of TA is?
- » Do teachers realise how much knowledge and how much life experience TA staff already have?

- » How do teachers know how to work with TA staff?
- » Are teacher's aware TA staff are waiting for them to give them clear direction?
- » Why do some teachers expect TA staff to be behaviour specialists?
- » Why are some TA's planning lessons?
- » Why isn't professional development compulsory for all TA staff when it is for teachers?
- » Why doesn't the DET offer free professional development for TA staff to support them?
- » Why is the salary for TA staff so low?
- » How do other countries monitor ongoing TA professional development?
- » How do other countries determine the skill level of TA workers?
- » Do other countries offer induction such as pre accredited courses?
- » If TA's are not trained before they enter the classroom, how many students are being disadvantaged?
- » How do other countries support TA staff to achieve excellence in their classrooms?

As advised, this Fellowship research project is still underway. So, if you are reading this paper, you can participate in international strategic networking and contact me on shereechevalier@gmail.com and respond to the following four questions. If you are at the EDULEARN19 presentation, please participate in the information sharing activity.

1. Are qualifications for Education Support ES staff necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to ES staff when managing student behaviour?

3. How are teachers advised to work with ES staff?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to ES staff?

Australian Teacher Aide - Data Collection

Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell are the Managing Directors and Founders of Australian Teacher Aide (ATA) [4]. They have extensive experience in the Education Support and training sector and are leaders in online professional development for schools. Their data from live polls and surveys is currently being used by SKILLS IQ [16] to ensure the proposed Education Support qualifications meet future industry needs in Australia.

The ATA research data includes the results from a recent survey, Help Shape the Future of Teacher Aide Training [17]. The survey results were published by Australian Teacher Aide in March 2019.

ATA collated the survey responses from 285 people: 235 Teacher Aides, 19 Education Support Trainers, 10 Teachers, 5 School Leaders and 16 Others who identified mostly as education support students, volunteers and administrators as well as teacher aides with specialist roles. Most participants in the survey were from the Primary and Secondary sector. 146 had between 2-10 years' experience, and 100 had over 10 years' experience. The survey was conducted via the Australian Teacher Aide website www.australianteacheraide.com.au.

ATA also conducted a series of live polls to learn more about how Teacher Aides (TA's) viewed their support role. The results of these polls were published in A Collaborative Framework for Student Success, an online video published by ATA in June 2017 [18]. The poll results were collected live from 24 TAs from four different states in Australia, who worked with Prep to Year 12 students in a range of direct education support roles.

3. RESULTS

Survey Results

The following results are from the Australian data collected from the ATA Help Shape the Future of Teacher Aide Training survey [17]. These results directly relate to the questions posed in this paper focusing on current ES qualifications, roles, professional development/training and student behavior.

Table 1. Please select your highest qualification

No qualifications	13
Certificate I or II	5
Certificate III	92
Certificate IV	80
Diploma or Higher	95

Table 2. Which of these skills and knowledge are essential to Teacher Aides performing their job? (numerous responses permitted)

Administration	100
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Table 3. How much of the working week do Teacher Aides spend providing social and emotional support?

Most of their time	147
Some of their time	127
Occasionally	11

Table 4. What amount of time do Teacher Aides spend supporting students with learning?

Most of their time	270
Some of their time	15

Poll Results - Teaching Assistants and Teachers working together

The following results are from the live polls published in the video A Collaborative Framework for Student Success [18]. These polls identified how teachers and teacher aides work together to support student learning. The TA’s were asked to choose one response to each of the following statements:

Table 5. Lesson preparation

Most of the teachers I support always make sure:	
I am prepared for a lesson	39%
sometimes make sure I am prepared for a lesson	39%
usually leave it to me to prepare for a lesson.	22%

Table 6. Time to practice a new task

Most of the students I support get:	
sufficient time to practice a new task	53%
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Table 7. Time to hear about student prior knowledge

How much time do your students get to talk about what they already know about a task?	
Students get sufficient time	40%
Students got limited time	50%
Students get no time at all	10%

ATA also collected anecdotal data from teachers and teacher aides in schools including:

- » Many teachers said they didn’t know how to work with TA’s.
- » Teacher Aides reported that they:
 - » lacked knowledge of curriculum.
 - » sometimes had little idea what students were learning, and ‘winged’ it (Australian slang for improvise).
 - » had little time to prepare or communicate with teachers
 - » were not given a lesson outline.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the data provided by ATA, it is evident that professional development and training for teachers and Education Support staff, can contribute to successful outcomes for students. The data presented indicates that of the teacher aides surveyed:

- » Teacher aides spent most of their time supporting learning
- » Two thirds did not feel fully prepared for their support role
- » Almost half of TA's spent most of their time providing social and emotional support to students
- » Skills and knowledge in behaviour, teaching and learning, and disability were considered essential to perform their job role
- » There were time constraints on teachers and support staff to collaborate
- » Almost half of the students supported by teacher aides only received limited time to practice a new task
- » There was limited recognition of the effect of prior knowledge on learning during planning time

The results relate to the focus of this paper as follows:

Highest Qualifications

Table 1 displays the results for 'Please select your highest qualification'. There were 285 ATA survey participants, comprising of 10 teachers, 5 school leaders, 19 ES Trainers, 235 TA's and 16 others [17]. In order to learn more about the qualification level of TA's, we can easily remove the teachers, school leaders and ES trainers from the table because teachers and school leaders need higher than Diploma qualifications and Trainers need a minimum Certificate IV qualification. The results then appear as 'Diploma or Higher' drops to 80, 'Certificate IV' drops to 61, 'Certificate III' remains at 92, likewise with 'Certificate I/II' as 5 and 'No

qualifications' at 13. The highest response qualification level left on the table is Certificate III which closely relates to the TA's who were surveyed.

Behaviour

Dealing with student behaviour plays a huge part in the role of a TA. Table 2 supports this notion with 263 responses indicating that 'Behaviour' is a skill and knowledge essential to TA's performing their job. TA's indicated they needed to know more about challenging behaviour strategies, to support students with a disability as outlined in Table 4.

The behavior of students can closely relate to their social and emotional state. As per Table 3, TA's spend 'most of their time providing social and emotional support'.

Getting to know and understand a student can assist with managing their challenging behavior. It can take time to build rapport with students. Many students communicate via their behavior and communication is the key to progress. Often conversation can be initiated in relation to the task the student has to work on. The TA can determine the student's existing knowledge about the task topic, control the flow of conversation with the student through questioning and therefore learn more about them. As displayed in Table 7, 60% of TA's polled by ATA felt the students they work with, got limited or no time at all to talk about what they already knew about a task. Time management could be an indicator of how TA's can be supported to assist students with challenging behaviour.

Behaviour is certainly a vital area that needs to be investigated to support successful outcomes for all stakeholders.

Teachers and Teacher Aides - Roles and collaboration

Teaching Aides spend 'most of their time' supporting students with learning (Table 4). Teaching and Learning have a high response rate in Table 2 as a skill and knowledge that is essential to the TA job role. It is alarming that during the poll [7]

TA's reported that they were not given a lesson plan, had little time to prepare or communicate with the teacher and sometimes had little idea about what students were learning. Table 6 indicates that 47% of TA's said students got limited time to practice a new task.

However, there were some signs of great working collaborations taking place between teachers and TA's. 39% of TA's said their teachers made sure they were prepared for the lesson (Table 5) and 53% thought that most of the students they support 'got sufficient time to practice a new task' (Table 6). It would be advantageous if there was an increase in these percentages.

It is concerning that nearly a quarter (22%) of TA's were left to prepare the lesson (Table 5) even though it is not part of their job role. As mentioned in the Introduction of this paper, 'A summary of the existing Victorian TA role is to undertake routine tasks as instructed by the classroom teacher and follow clear policies and procedures. TA's are not to teach and/or plan full classes. The responsibility for the student remains clearly with the teacher.' [1]

The results show learning is being hindered here. Achieving successful outcomes for students is at risk. Yes, TA's are following the instructions of the teacher, but they are being asked to plan and possibly teach without qualifications. Teachers are at risk of not following their Duty of Care obligations. As per the ATA anecdotal data collected from teachers in schools, 'Many teachers said they didn't know how to work with TA's'. This supports my experiences and observations.

The ES role is to 'undertake routine tasks as instructed by the classroom teacher' [1]. However, survey results as indicated in Table 2 show TA's realistically do a lot more than routine tasks. Responses indicate TA's require skills and knowledge about Disability and Additional Needs, Behaviour, Teaching and Learning, Information Technology and Administration. These are essential for TA's to perform their job. It is quite obvious TA's do a lot more than undertake routine tasks!

Australia's Future

Whole school collaboration is vital to achieving successful outcomes for all and this can be achieved by providing further professional development and training for all.

ATA are passionate about enabling support staff to work with teachers to support successful student outcomes. In addition to their live polls, the online video, A Collaborative Framework for Student Success [18] describes how an understanding of the relevant international research, as well as contemporary teaching and learning principles, are essential for effective support practices in schools.

As a result, ATA developed four professional learning resources called eTAPS: Effective Teacher Aide Practices for Schools ([19], [20], [21], [22]) aimed at providing TA's in schools with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective student support. These resources are four modules which assist TA's to collaborate with teachers, prepare for student learning, support student learning and give feedback to students and teachers (2017 – 2019).

The future is promising for change in Australia. The fact that this Fellowship has been granted is a positive move as I am obliged to report my findings back to the Department of Education and Training (DET) and International Specialised Skills Institute (ISSI). Perhaps we can adopt procedures like those in Singapore and offer a more structured, specialised supported role for ES? Perhaps we can learn from the UK and work on maximising the impact of teaching assistants [10] and create a strategic plan, aiming for excellence as we train staff to support successful outcomes for students.

Further research is required to gather more information both in and outside of Australia. Given what was found in Australian studies, would you expect to find a similar result in your country? What do you do differently? I would love to hear from you, so please email me at sherechevalier@gmail.com.

The four areas under review include:

1. Are qualifications for Education Support ES staff necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to ES staff when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with ES staff?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to ES staff?

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- » I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, of elders past and present, on which meetings and the research for this paper continues to take place.
- » Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell from Australian Teacher Aide (ATA). Thank you for sharing your survey results, research data, guidance and expert advice.
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Appendix D

‘Teacher Aides Around the Globe: What we can learn from other countries,’ hosted by Australian Teacher Aide

Teacher Aides Around the Globe: What we can learn from other countries




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1



Sheree Chevalier
Teacher, Trainer, Student, 2018 Fellow

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2

This webinar is for you if you want to learn:

- about Teacher Aide practices from other countries
- recommendations for Victoria to improve

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3

A bit about me

- **Studies** - Bachelor of Arts Degree (Music and English) and full teaching qualifications
- **Worked** – in Retail, Travel, Events and Music Industries
- **Education:**
 - Teacher for over twelve years in Africa and Australia working in Government schools
 - Acting Leading Teacher (Community Development), Year 11 student advisor, Assistant VCAL coordinator and Teacher Aide
 - Works on special projects for the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA)
- **Now** - a trainer and assessor for national Education Support training packages.

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4

Webinar Overview

1. Why/what I am researching about Teacher Aides (TA)
2. Australia's current TA practice
3. TAs best practice in other countries - Singapore, England etc.
4. Ten considerations proposed - Victorian Department of Education and Training
5. Your opportunity for feedback via 'ATA Tolls' and Q & A
Input from all Australian states welcome



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5

Why did I start the research?

- Taught many students in a school classroom
- TAs in my school classroom
- Observed adult students train to be TAs in over 50 schools in Victoria

Reflected on the collaboration between teachers and TAs
Lots of gaps and questions



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6

Further reflections

- Education level of TA's?
- How are TAs supported to manage student behaviour?
- TA Professional Development (PD) opportunities?

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Applied for a Department of Education and Training and International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship to research global best practice regarding TAs



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Fellowship Aim

Assist in building the 'Education State' of Victoria to produce excellence and reduce the impact of disadvantage.

Research how other countries are achieving excellence in the growth area of Education Support to develop greater employment and further educational outcomes.

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Four questions to explore best global practice:

1. Are qualifications for TAs necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to TAs when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with TAs?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to TAs?

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How can I visit/learn from a lot of countries in short time?



Find international education conferences
Meet education specialists

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Planned travel to

- School visits and meetings
Location: United Kingdom – Buckinghamshire, Slough, London
- Conference – Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES), theme 'Inclusion in a Changing World'
Location: Montego Bay, Jamaica
- Conference – EDULEARN19 over 800 participants who represent over 80 countries attend
Location: Palma Mallorca, Spain

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Asked to present at both conferences ?

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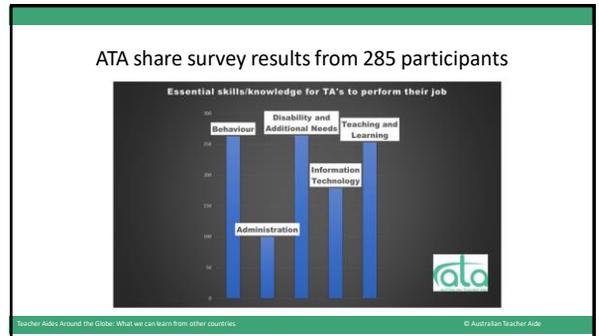
14



ATA's Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell
Thank You

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ATA share survey results from 285 participants

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ATA share poll results from 24 TA participants

Do teachers give students **time** to practice a new task?

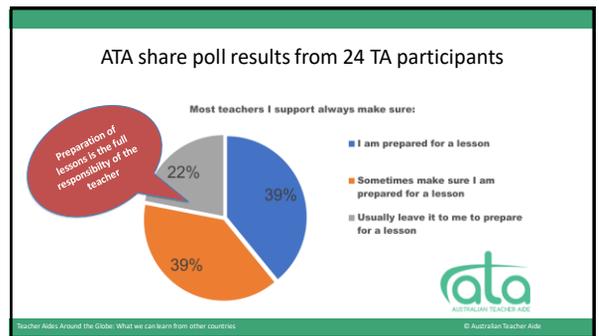
sufficient time 53%

limited time 47%

and.....

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ATA Anecdotal Data

- Teachers - Many teachers not sure how to work with TA's
- Teaching Assistants:
 - lacked knowledge of curriculum and 'winged' the learning, especially in secondary schools
 - minimal time to prepare
 - no lesson outline

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Australia's world ranking

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Every three years PISA tests 15-year-old students from all over the world in reading, mathematics and science

Australia's ranking 2015 -2016 was #

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Singapore

- PISA 2015-2016
- TA's Tertiary qualified
- Specialists in Behaviour
- Professional Development provided
- Leaders - advise teachers/schools



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United Kingdom

Research - initially showed

'the more support students received from TAs; the less academic progress was made over a school year.'

Further research revealed.....

'it was the **leadership** of TAs that hindered successful student outcomes, not the work of the TAs.'

Now: UK develop a 'Whole School practice' initiative to incorporate and appreciate the role of the TA.



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The UK advise schools:

1. 'TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low attaining pupils
2. Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
3. Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
4. Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom
5. Use TAs to deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions
6. Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction
7. Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions'

'Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants'. Accessed 11 May 2019. Retrieved from <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/>

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United Kingdom



Teacher Aides/Teacher Assistants support students so they can be as independent as possible.

Key Skills: planning, problem solving and reflecting



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United Kingdom 

In the UK, TAs are assigned to teachers

In Victoria, TAs are assigned to identified students

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Other United Kingdom learnings

- Professional Standards for TA's
- TAs can become Higher Level TAs (HLTA). Experience is valued. Career progression = salary increase
- Some schools employ TAs as trainees. Earn money whilst studying to be qualified teachers
- Some schools give TAs 'time-out' when stressed

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United Kingdom

Interested in an Australian resource

Karen Kearns book
'Supporting Education: The Teaching Assistant's Handbook'
Used for training Certificate III Education Support students

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Reflection



Neither the UK nor Australia require 'education support' staff to have education qualifications to 'support education'.

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UK Teaching Assistant's comment

Behaviour

Knowledge of how to deal with behaviour is vital to TAs achieving success.

There is an increase in students with Special Education Needs (SEN) and often their behaviour is communication.

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UK Teaching Assistant's comment

Teacher and TAs working together

Knowledge

- teachers lack knowledge regarding students with SEN
- teachers need to be trained on disability and behaviour management

Time

- volunteer - some TAs volunteer their time to meet with teachers to receive daily instructions. Not ideal
- timetable - 'whole-school approach' schools, timetable 30 mins before the first class and 30 mins at the end of the day to plan, update and reflect together

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UK Teaching Assistant's comment

Professional Development (PD)

- in-house PD for teachers and TAs is often 1 hour a week at many schools.
- teachers and TAs need training in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), due to the increase in students with ASD
- plan TA Induction which includes training
- TAs have regular reviews with school leaders

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International conference presentations



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Participants who attended my presentations were from

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various states of America • St Lucia • Jamaica • Barbados • Turks and Caicos Islands • Brazil • Suriname • Colombia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Republic • South Korea • Italy • Colombia • New Zealand • Denmark • South Africa • Slovenia • Spain |
|--|---|

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Conference key learnings

Jamaica

- developing from Third World country status
- TA's are employed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) who train/induct the TA before they enter classrooms
- Teachers are instructed how to work with TA's
- Teachers update the MOE of the TA progress



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Conference key learnings

- Many countries do require qualifications - the minimum is Year 12 High School level and two years at College
- Many were surprised qualifications are not required for TAs in Australia
- Parents expect/presume TAs are qualified

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Conference key learnings

- PD is done in-house in many countries
- Communication is a problem between teachers and TAs mainly due to time
- Many educators had not thought about the role of TAs

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SUGGESTIONS

Further research, interviews and surveys should be conducted in Victoria to capture reality and confirm assumptions.

Ten considerations to improve the outcomes for vulnerable students



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1. Establish compulsory industry endorsed qualifications for TAs to work in Victorian schools

- Most countries require a minimum qualification for TAs to work in schools
- Many parents presume TAs have qualifications
- Education Support is a growth area in Australia. Free 2020 TAFE courses for Education Support Certificates III and IV (17 units each)
- Education support work skill set (5 units) is endorsed by industry. Intended for commencing work as a teacher's aide
- Existing TA staff apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to gain qualifications
- Current Education Support packages and skill set is under review

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2. Establish a Registration body for TAs working in Victoria, including Professional Standards

- Regulate who is working with children in schools - qualified and suitable to work with students.
- Track Working with Children Check (WWCC) registration and renewal
- PD can be logged and tracked
- Professional Standards will clarify the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required to be TAs

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3. Clarify the TA job description to include the role is to support students work towards independence. Reconsider the title, role, responsibilities.

- Include in the job description the role of the TA is to support student learning so the student can work towards independence
- Professional standards will assist with the expectations of the role and responsibilities
- Title to reflect connection to student

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4. Recognise the wellbeing of TAs is of high importance

Vulnerable/disadvantaged students, that TAs work with, may have behavioural issues. TAs can be spat on, hit, punched, scratched, kicked and verbally abused.

To support health and wellbeing, leadership could:

- offer strategic support e.g. time out
- advise coping strategies
- train TAs and equip them with coping strategies **before** they enter the classroom



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5. Provide progressive pathways and awards for TAs

- Promote - Offer regional senior specialist positions in behaviour management, literacy and numeracy
- Traineeships – Offer school-based traineeships for TAs. Train to be Education Support Trainers and/or classroom teachers.
- Awards
 - Victorian Department of Education awards for TAs (various categories)
 - Promote Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards

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6. Train TAs how to work with teachers and school leadership

- Provide a clear fair process for TAs to follow if an instructed task is not part of their job description (eg plan classes - duty of care concern)
- TAs to be aware of the Professional Standards for teachers
- Advise TAs when to talk to teachers about class plans and student progress (eg timetable)
- Provide a Professional Standard for TAs with advice on how to work with teachers and leadership

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7. Train TAs and teachers on disability and managing student behaviour regularly

- Many teachers in Victoria have minimal formal training on disability and behaviour management
- Since 2017 Victorian teachers, to retain registration, are required to undertake disability related PD. It should be the same for TAs
- Both teachers and TAs need frequent training on how manage student behaviour. E.g. share in-house knowledge
- If behaviour is communication, we need to understand the language

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8. Train teachers about the role and responsibilities of TAs and how to instruct TAs

- Advise teachers that TAs are to follow their instructions. Include in the teacher's job description/standards
- Victorian teachers need to know the TA's job role and responsibilities
- Train teachers to provide clear instructions indicating expectations to the TA. For example, task completion or the student to gain skills



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9. Train school leaders on how to promote collaboration between teachers and TAs

School leaders could:

- Timetable collaboration time
- Alternate the teacher and TA working with students with special needs
- Plan TA inductions which include training
- Encourage TA's to conduct in-house PD for all staff
- Encourage regular contributions by TAs in staff meetings

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10. Promote change and 'whole school collaboration'

- Further research, interviews and surveys should be conducted in Victoria to capture reality and confirm assumptions
- School consultation/whole-school collaboration and professional development for all could assist in achieving the Victorian Education State targets and improve student outcomes

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Summary

Four questions I asked internationally:

1. Education/qualifications of Teaching Assistants/Aides?
2. Behaviour support?
3. Teachers and TA's working together?
4. TA's Professional Development?

Ten considerations for the Victorian Department of Education

1. Qualifications for TAs
2. Registration for TAs
3. TAs support students towards independence
4. Recognise TA wellbeing
5. Provide TA pathways and awards
6. Train TAs how to work with teachers and school leadership together?
7. Train teachers and TAs on disability& managing student behaviour
8. Train teachers about the role of TAs
9. Train school leaders to promote collaboration
10. Promote change/more research/professional development

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Victoria's recent improvements

- Teacher training
- Teacher training courses
- Curriculum
- Aboriginal education plan
- Some independent/faith based schools – requesting Certificate IV qualifications
- Some schools - Professional Development

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Thank you to Stella and Mandy - Australian Teacher Aide

- collaborative support
- sharing of data
- passion for providing professional development to improve student learning outcomes



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Thank you

Victorian Department of Education and Training
and
International Specialised Skills Institute
for the Fellowship



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Want to have your say?

Please email me - sherechevalier@gmail.com

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Q & A
and Polls

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Appendix E

DET Presentation

Sheree Chevalier - Fellowship Aim

Assist in building the 'Education State' of Victoria to promote excellence and reduce the impact of disadvantage.

Research how other countries are achieving excellence in the growth area of Education Support/Teacher Aides to develop greater employment opportunities and improve educational outcomes.

1

Four questions to explore global best practice:

1. Are qualifications for TAs necessary in your country?
2. How does your country provide support to TAs when managing student behaviour?
3. How are teachers advised to work with TAs?
4. How does your country provide Professional Development to TAs?

2

Ten considerations to improve the outcomes for vulnerable students

Note: Students and teachers may be in a Primary/Secondary school setting

Live Polls from ATA webinar – 56 participants

93% Teacher Aide,
2% Education Support Trainer,
5% other
0% for teachers or school leaders



3

1. Establish compulsory industry endorsed qualifications for TAs to work in Victorian schools

- Most countries require a minimum qualification for TAs to work in schools
- Many parents presume TAs have qualifications
- Education Support is a growth area in Australia. Free 2019 & 2020 TAFE courses for Education Support Certificates III and IV (17 units each)
- Education support work skill set (5 units) is endorsed by industry. Intended for commencing work as a teacher's aide
- Existing TA staff apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to gain qualifications
- Current Education Support packages and skill set is under review

4

Poll 1. Should TAs employed in Australian schools possess a minimum qualification?

Yes	87%
No	4%
Unsure	9%

5

1. Establish compulsory industry endorsed qualifications for TAs to work in Victorian schools

Recommendations:

- Work with SkillsIQ to change packages - Cert III/IV 17 units is under review
- If TAs have Cert III/IV qualifications should their qualifications be reflected in a higher salary?
- RPL – need more trainers to assess RPL for existing TA staff

6

1. Establish compulsory industry endorsed qualifications for TAs to work in Victorian schools

CHCSS00058 - Education support work skill set units. 'This skill set provides a set of skills for commencing work as a teacher's aide in an education support context.'

Current five units are:

- CHCEDS001 Comply with legislative, policy and industrial requirements in the education environment
- CHCEDS002 Assist implementation of planned educational programs
- CHCEDS003 Contribute to student education in all developmental domains
- CHCEDS021 Assist in facilitation of student learning
- CHCEDS023 Supervise students outside the classroom

Skillset – is industry endorsed. The fellow suggests they should be revised to include Student Behaviour management strategies and learn about Special Needs. This could be used as an induction. The five units should be core for Cert III/IV certificates if students want to progress their studies, then they could apply for 5 credits. Cert III information on next slide.

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCSS00058>

7

CHC30213 - Certificate III in Education Support 17 units – 12 core and 5 electives

This qualification reflects the role of workers in a range of education settings, including public and independent schools and community education settings, who provide assistance and support to teachers and students under broad-based supervision.

Core units:

CHCDIV001	Work with diverse people
CHCDIV002	Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety
CHCECE006	Support behaviour of children and young people
CHCEDS001	Comply with legislative, policy and industrial requirements in the education environment
CHCEDS002	Assist implementation of planned educational programs
CHCEDS003	Contribute to student education in all developmental domains
CHCEDS004	Contribute to organisation and management of classroom or centre
CHCEDS005	Support the development of literacy and oral language skills
CHCEDS006	Support the development of numeracy skills
CHCEDS007	Work effectively with students and colleagues
CHCEDS017	Contribute to the health and safety of students
CHCEDS018	Support students with additional needs in the classroom environment

8

2. Establish a Registration body for TAs working in Victoria, including Professional Standards

- Clear guidelines around who can work with children in schools - must be qualified and suitable
- Track Working with Children Check (WWCC) registration and renewal
- PD can be logged and tracked
- Professional Standards will clarify the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required to be TAs

9

Poll 2. Do TAs need to be registered?

Yes	72%
No	13%
Unsure	15%

10

2. Establish a Registration body for TAs working in Victoria, including Professional Standards

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with the Victorian Institute of Teaching VIT – re registration/tracking PD
 - How does DET track Working with Children Check (WWCC) registration and renewal? Teachers are tracked via VIT? How are TAs?
 - If TAs are registered it may strengthen DET compliance with the Child Safe Standards Bill 2015
 - Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety
 - Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse
 - Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

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2. Establish a Registration body for TAs working in Victoria, including Professional Standards

We could learn from the UK and include similar Professional Standards

UK Professional Standards

'clarify the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required to be TAs
The Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants are set out in four themes.

1. Personal and professional conduct
2. Knowledge and understanding
3. Teaching and learning
4. Working with others

Within each theme there are several standards expected of teaching assistants.

<http://maximisingtas.co.uk/assets/content/ta-standards-final-june2016-1.pdf>

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3. Provide greater clarity in the TA job description. Reconsider the title, role and responsibilities.

- Include in the job description; include 'the role is to support students to work towards independence'.
- Professional standards will identify the expectations of the role and associated responsibilities
- Title to reflect connection to student

13

Poll 3a Do TAs need more clarity on their job role and responsibilities?

Yes	84%
No	11%
Unsure	4%

• 3b Should there be one title for TAs in Australia?

Yes	69%
No	14%
Unsure	17%

14

3. Clarify the TA job description to include the role is to support students work towards independence. Reconsider the title, role, responsibilities.

Dimensions of Work -ES under Student/Teacher Support
<https://www.education.gov.au/travel/Documents/Dimensions-of-Work-ES.pdf>

'Education support class Level 1 Range 1

Undertakes routine tasks that are usually carried out under close supervision and direction. Work that carries some degree of independence will generally involve a limited number of tasks performed on a regular basis where **priorities are clear, procedures are well established and direction is readily available.**

Is this really happening in our schools? Do we have procedures?- see next slide regarding the essential skills that TAs say they need ----- these may be more than routine tasks

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ATA survey results - 285 participants



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4. Recognise the wellbeing of TAs is of high importance

Vulnerable/disadvantaged students, that TAs work with, may have behavioural issues. TAs can be spat on, hit, punched, scratched, kicked and verbally abused.

To support health and wellbeing, leadership could:

- offer strategic support e.g. time out
- train TAs and equip them with coping strategies **before** they enter the classroom



17

Poll 4. Are TAs inducted in safety, mental health and wellbeing at your school?

Yes	30%
No	64%
Unsure	6%

18

4. Recognise the wellbeing of TAs is of high importance

TAs can be spat on, hit, punched, scratched, kicked and verbally abused as part of their job.

OH&S?

Some students do not respect TAs (TAs have limited authority) so they take out their frustration with learning on the TA.

Suggestions:

- Offer strategic support e.g. time out
- Advise coping strategies
- Counselling sessions
- Offer TA mentors
- Train TAs and equip them with coping strategies **before** they enter the classroom

To confirm our discussion - Range 1-1 full time TA starting salary is \$46,159 (from 1.10.19)
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Salary-EducationSupportClass.pdf>



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5. Provide progressive pathways and awards for TAs

- Promote - Offer regional senior specialist positions in behaviour management, well-being, literacy and numeracy
- Traineeships – Offer school-based traineeships for TAs. Train to be Education Support Trainers and/or classroom teachers.
- Awards
 - Victorian Department of Education awards for TAs (various categories)
 - Promote Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards

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Poll 5. Is a career pathway important for TAs?

Yes	89%
No	0%
Unsure	11%

21

5. Provide career progression, pathways and awards for TAs

- Suggest trialing regional senior specialist positions in behaviour management, well-being, literacy and numeracy
- Offer a monetary bonus if students have certificate III/IV in Education Support.
- Acknowledgement and Awards –minimal cost to implement

22

6. Train TAs how to work with teachers and school leadership

- Provide a clear fair process for TAs to follow if an instructed task is not part of their job description (eg plan classes - duty of care concern)
- TAs to be aware of the Professional Standards for teachers
- Advise TAs when to talk to teachers about class plans and student progress (eg timetable)
- Provide a Professional Standard for TAs with advice on how to work with teachers and leadership

23

Poll 6. Do you think TAs understand the role and responsibilities of classroom teachers?

Yes	68%
No	20%
Unsure	11%

24

6. Train TAs how to work with teachers and school leadership

Some teachers are instructing TAs to plan classes and some TAs are doing this to keep their jobs ...this is why 'Provide a clear fair process for TAs to follow if an instructed task is not part of their job description' has been included

25

7. Train TAs and teachers on disability and managing student behaviour regularly

- Many teachers in Victoria have minimal formal training on disability and behaviour management
- Since 2017 Victorian teachers, to retain registration, are required to undertake disability related PD. It should be the same for TAs
- Both teachers and TAs need frequent training on how manage student behaviour. E.g. share in-house knowledge
- If behaviour is communication, we need to understand the language

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Poll 7. Do you receive regular PD, relevant to your role, such as working with students with disability, and managing behaviour?

Yes	23%
No	66%
Unsure	11%

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ATA survey results - 285 participants



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8. Train teachers about the role and responsibilities of TAs and how to instruct TAs

- Advise teachers that TAs are to follow their instructions. Include in the teacher's job description/standards
- Victorian teachers need to know the TA's job role and responsibilities
- Train teachers to provide clear instructions indicating expectations to the TA. For example, task completion or the student to gain skills



29

ATA share poll results from 24 TA participants

Do teachers give students **time** to practice a new task?

sufficient time 53%

limited time 47%

and.....



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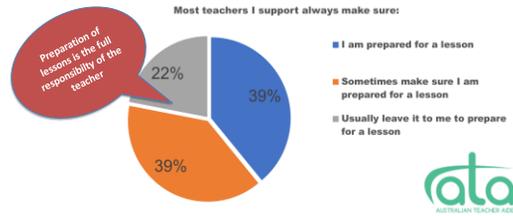
30

Poll 8. Do you think teachers understand the role and responsibilities of TAs?

Yes	23
No	70
Unsure	7

31

ATA share poll results from 24 TA participants



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Question posted to VIT - 'Can education support staff (ESS) undertake certain teaching duties under the supervision of a registered teacher?'

Answer from VIT

'It is an offence under the *Education and Training Reform Act (2006)* for anyone to undertake the duties of a teacher in a Victorian school if they do not currently hold provisional or (full) registration as a school teacher, or Permission to Teach granted by VIT. This offence also applies to **Education Support Staff undertaking the duties of a teacher in a Victorian school, even if they are under the supervision of a registered teacher.**

Source: <https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities-for-employers/principals/schools>

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8. Train teachers about the role and responsibilities of TAs and how to instruct TAs

Do we need to remind teachers that the 'responsibility for students remains clearly with a teacher?'

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Dimensions-of-Work-ES.pdf>

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9. Train school leaders on how to promote collaboration between teachers and TAs

School leaders could:

- Timetable collaboration time
- Alternate the teacher and TA working with students with special needs
- Plan TA inductions which include training
- Encourage TA's to conduct in-house PD for all staff
- Encourage regular contributions by TAs in staff meetings

35

Poll 9. At your school, do school leaders provide teachers and TAs sufficient time to collaborate about student learning?

Yes	5%
NO	86%
Unsure	9%

36

Summary

Four questions I asked internationally:	Ten considerations for the Victorian Department of Education
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Education/qualifications of Teaching Assistants/Aides?2. Behaviour support?3. Teachers and TA's working together?4. TA's Professional Development?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Qualifications for TAs2. Registration for TAs3. TAs support students towards independence4. Recognise TA wellbeing5. Provide TA pathways and awards6. Train TAs how to work with teachers and school leadership7. Train teachers and TAs on disability & managing student behaviour8. Train teachers about the role of TAs9. Train school leaders to promote collaboration10. Promote change/more research/professional development

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