

Re-Thinking the Role of Teaching Assistants in Inclusive Schools

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TAs in Inclusive Schools



Long term international trend towards inclusive education.



Large body of international research examining the effectiveness of TA support.



Research has raised questions about the effectiveness of current models of support.



Significant variance between schools.

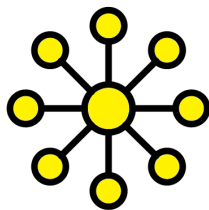


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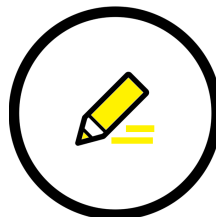
Research- Key Findings



Preparedness



Deployment



Practice

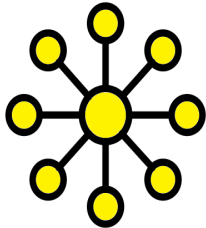


Student Outcomes



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Deployment



1. TA supporting students in regular classrooms alongside the class teacher
 2. TA delivering structured interventions (during and away from regular lessons)
 3. TA supporting positive approaches to learning (behaviour, social and emotional)
- Informal instructional role supporting pupils with *most need*
 - Separation effect observed
 - Regularly adopt the status of “primary educator” for students with disabilities

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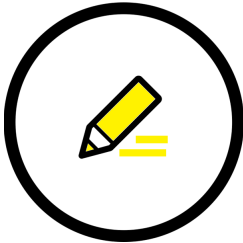
Preparedness



- Vast majority reported no allocated planning or feedback time
- Communication is largely ad hoc
- Many TAs report feeling underprepared for the tasks they are given

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Practice

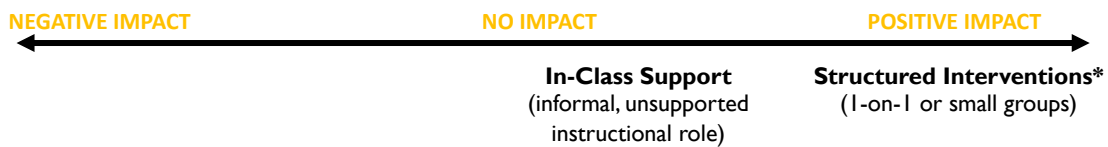


- TAs assume much responsibility for moment-by-moment pedagogical decision making
- Provide a high amount of verbal differentiation
- Emphasis on task completion and correction
- Not always encouraging students to think for themselves



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Learning Outcomes



* Only when working in structured settings, using evidence-based programs with high quality training and support



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Learning Outcomes



- The more support students received, the less progress they made
- The typical deployment of TAs under everyday conditions is not leading to significant improvement in academic outcomes
- Evidence of negative impact was most marked for students with disabilities (who typically receive the most support)

Positive Approaches to Learning

- Findings have shown TA support to increase dependency
- TAs help ease teacher workload and stress



Recommendations



Preparedness



- Ensure TAs are given appropriate and ongoing training and PD opportunities
- Upskill teachers in working with and managing TAs
- Allow for joint planning, preparation and feedback time
 - Full responsibility for ALL students rests with the teacher (planning, instruction, assessment, behaviour management)

TA/Teacher Collaboration

Adjusting work hours- start early, finish early

Creative Timetabling- Use assembly time

Shared planning and non-contact times



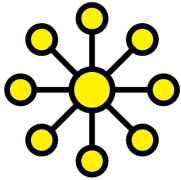
Preparedness



- Establish systems for effective communication
- Identify and utilise TA strengths
- Provide TAs with information about their students, classroom routines and expectations
- Provide TAs with information prior to a lesson commencing
 - What are students expected to know, do during the lesson
 - Intended learning outcomes
 - Expected/required feedback



Deployment



- TAs should be deployed in ways in which they **SUPPLEMENT RATHER THAN REPLACE** the teacher
- Deploy in a way that allows teachers to spend more time with students who require additional support
- Use TAs as a resource to allow the teacher to spend additional time with students with highest level of need (providing additional instruction and modelling)

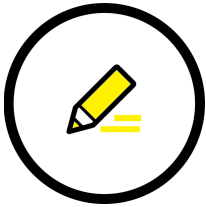
Avoid using the least qualified personnel to teach students with the most complex learning profiles.

Deployment

- TAs should be assigned to a class/teacher rather than individual students (year level, subject area, department)
- Avoid being fixed in one location or tied to one student



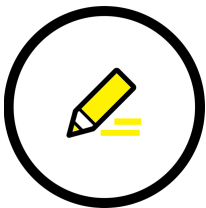
Practice



- Ensure TAs are appropriately introduced to the whole class
- Provide opportunities for rapport building- shared interests
- Make TAs more visible during whole-class delivery
- Use whole-class delivery as a time to model teaching techniques and approaches to TA
- Encourage flexible groupings- rotate working with TA, teacher, independently and with peers.



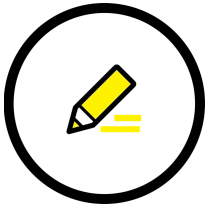
Practice



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Practice



- Use strategies that encourage independent learning
 - Open ended questions
 - Help students take ownership of a task by providing the **LEAST AMOUNT OF HELP FIRST**
 - Avoid over-prompting
 - Allow wait time
 - Camouflage- don't hover
 - Focus on the *process* of learning, not the product



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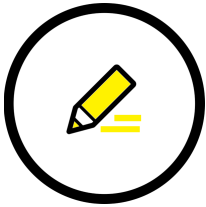
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AFTER ONLY TWO MONTHS AS A TEACHER ASSISTANT, GLADYS FINDS HER SPELLING HAS IMPROVED, MATH SKILLS ARE HONED, AND SHE HAS DISCOVERED SHE HAS ARTISTIC ABILITY.



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Practice

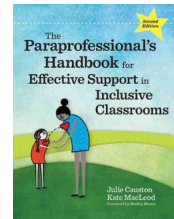


- Ensure the student has an **active voice**
 - What can TAs do to help you?
 - What makes a good TA?
 - What does “good support” like like to you?
 - When are the times you need support?
 - Are there times you don’t want support?
 - How can you signal to me that you need support?



"Do the best you can
until you know better.
Then when you know
better, do better."
—Maya Angelou.

- **Evidence for Learning TA Guidance Report**- https://d288jjeqo2x7eq.cloudfront.net/e4l-guidance-reports/teaching-assistants/Making-best-use-of-Teaching-Assistants_Guidance-Report.pdf?v=1653968113
- **Evidence for Learning Recommendations Poster**- https://d288jjeqo2x7eq.cloudfront.net/e4l-guidance-reports/teaching-assistants/Making-best-use-of-Teaching-Assistants_Summary-of-recommendations.pdf?v=1664322536
- **KTI Inclusive Education Guide for Schools**- <http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-effective-teacher-aide-practice/>
- **The Golden Rule of Providing Support in Inclusive Classrooms:** Support Others as You Would Wish to Be Supported by Julie Causton
- Webster, R., Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., Brown, P., Martin, C. and Russell, A. (2011) 'The wider pedagogical role of teaching assistants', *School Leadership & Management*, 31: 1, 3 — 20
- Radford, J., Bosanquet, P., Webster, R. and Blatchford, P. (2015) 'Scaffolding learning for independence: Clarifying teacher and teaching assistant roles for children with special educational needs'. *Learning and Instruction*. 36. pp. 1-10
- Webster, R.E; Blatchford, P.; (2019) Making sense of 'teaching', 'support' and 'differentiation': the educational experiences of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans and Statements in mainstream secondary schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* , 34 (1) pp. 98-113.



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