Teaching assistants: What should I consider?

Before you implement this strategy in your learning environment, consider the following:

1. Have you identified the activities where TAs can support learning, rather than simply managing tasks?
2. Have you provided support and training for teachers and TAs so that they understand how to work together effectively?
3. How will you ensure that teachers do not reduce their support or input to the pupils supported by TAs?
4. Have you considered how you will evaluate the impact of how you deploy your TAs?
Technical Appendix

Definition
Teaching assistants (also known as TAs or classroom support assistants) are adults who support teachers in the classroom. Teaching assistants’ duties can vary widely from school to school, ranging from providing administrative and classroom support to providing targeted academic support to individual pupils or small groups.

Search terms: support staff; adult support staff; teaching assistants; associate staff; classroom assistants; auxiliary teachers; teachers’ aide; education paraprofessional

Evidence Rating
A number of systematic reviews of the impact of support staff in schools have been conducted. However, there are no meta-analyses specifically looking at the impact of TAs on learning. Overall the evidence is limited.

Additional Cost Information
The average cost of employing a teaching assistant, including salary and on-costs, is estimated at about £18,000. Overall, costs are estimated as high.
References

The impact of adult support staff on pupils and mainstream schools

The impact of support staff in schools. Results from the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff project. (Strand 2 Wave 2) (DCSF-RR148)
London: Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)

The impact of support staff on pupils’ “positive approaches to learning” and their academic progress

The role and effects of teaching assistants in English primary schools (Years 4 to 6) 2000–2003. Results from the Class Size and Pupil-Adult Ratios (CSPAR) KS2 Project

5. Bouyer-Crane, C., Snowling, M. J., Duff, F. J., Fieldsend, E., Carroll, J. M., Miles, J. & Hulme, C.
Improving early language and literacy skills: Differential effects of an oral language versus a phonology with reading intervention

Intervention after grade 1: Serving increased numbers of struggling readers effectively

7. Burgoyne, K., Duff, F. J., Clarke, P. J., Buckley, S., Snowling, M. J., & Hulme, C.
Efficacy of a reading and language intervention for children with Down syndrome: a randomized controlled trial

8. Butt, R. and Lowe, K.
Teaching assistants and class teachers: differing perceptions, role confusion and the benefits of skills-based training

Reading with vocabulary intervention: Evaluation of an instruction for children with poor response to reading intervention

10. Ehri, L. C., Dreyer, L. G., Flugman, B., & Gross, A.
Reading Rescue: An effective tutoring intervention model for language-minority students who are struggling readers in first grade

The impact of teaching assistants on improving pupils’ academic achievement in mainstream schools: a review of the literature

Teacher aides and students’ academic achievement

Switch-on Reading Evaluation Report and Executive Summary
EEF, London (2014)

Added value or a familiar face? The impact of learning support assistants on young readers
15 Hatcher, P. J., Goetz, K., Snowling, M. J., Hulme, C., Gibbs, S., & Smith, G.  
Evidence for the effectiveness of the Early Literacy Support programme  
British Journal of Educational Psychology, 76(2), 351-367  
(2006)

16 Mecrow, C., Beckwith, I., & Klee, T.  
An exploratory trial of the effectiveness of an enhanced consultative approach to delivering speech and language intervention in schools  
International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, 45(3), 354-367  
(2010)

17 Mercer, C. D., Campbell, K. U., Miller, M. D., Mercer, K. D., & Lane, H. B.  
Effects of a reading fluency intervention for middle schoolers with specific learning disabilities  
Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 15(4), 179-189  
(2000)

18 Miller, S. D.  
Partners-in-reading: Using classroom assistants to provide tutorial assistance to struggling first-grade readers  
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 8(3), 333-349  
(2003)

19 Moore, W. and Hammond, I.  
Using education assistants to help pave the road to literacy: Supporting oral language, letter-sound knowledge and phonemic awareness in the pre-primary year  
Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties, 16(2), 85–110  
(2011)

20 Morris, D.  
Using Noncertified Tutors to Work with At Risk Readers: An Evidence-Based Model  
The Elementary School Journal, 106(4), 351-362  
(2006)

21 Muijs, D. & Reynolds, D.  
The effectiveness of the use of learning support assistants in improving the mathematics achievement of low achieving pupils in primary school  
Educational Research, 45.3 pp 219-230  
(2003)

22 NFER  
A Randomised Trial of Catch Up Numeracy® Evaluation Report and Executive Summary  
EEF, London  
(2004)

The Effectiveness of Volunteer Tutoring Programs for Elementary and Middle School Students: A Meta-Analysis  
Review of Educational Research, 79 (3), 3-38  
(2009)

24 Savage, R., & Carless, S.  
The impact of early reading interventions delivered by classroom assistants on attainment at the end of Year 2  
(2008)

25 Savage, R., Carless, S., & Stuart, M.  
The effects of rime and phoneme-based teaching delivered by learning support assistants  
Journal of Research in Reading, 26(3), 211-233  
(2003)

26 Swann, W., & Loxley, A.  
The impact of school-based training on classroom assistants in primary schools  
Research papers in education, 13(2), 141-160  
(1998)

27 Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A.  
Repeated reading intervention: Outcomes and interactions with readers’ skills and classroom instruction  
Journal of Educational Psychology, 100(2), 272  
(2008)

28 Vadasy, P. F., Sanders, E. A., & Tudor, S.  
Effectiveness of paraeducator-supplemented individual instruction beyond basic decoding skills  
Journal of Learning Disabilities, 40(6), 508-525  
(2007)
### Summary of effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Studies</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
<th>FSM effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., Brown, P., Martin, C., Russell, A., &amp; Webster, R. (2011 , )</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ehri, L. C., Dreyer, L. G., Flugman, B., &amp; Gross, A.. (2007)</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerber, S.B., Finn, J.D., Achilles, C.M. and Boyd-Zacharias, J. (2001)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>(compared with regular classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(compared with small classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray, C., McCloy, S., Dunbar, C., Dunn, J., Mitchell, D., &amp; Ferguson, J. (2007)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatcher, P. J., Goetz, K., Snowling, M. J., Hulme, C., Gibbs, S., &amp; Smith, G. (2006)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, W. and Hammond, L. (2011)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris, D. (2006)</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muijs, D. &amp; Reynolds, D. (2003)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadas, P. F., Sanders, E. A., &amp; Tudor, S. (2007)</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative Effect Size</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The right hand column provides detail on the specific outcome measures or, if in brackets, details of the intervention or control group.