

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) aims to develop the way that teaching assistants can improve students' outcomes by working in a whole class setting. It provides training, at different times, for all staff in the school:

- Headteachers and one other senior leader from each school attend 4 local training sessions, explaining the research about effective use of TAs, and introducing the framework for improving TA practice
- Consultants attend the school in between training sessions, to support school leaders with reviewing current practice, strategic planning and the implementation of key principles and recommendations
- Training sessions for TAs on effective interactions with pupils and improving pupil independence, with gap tasks in-between
- Training sessions for teachers on planning lessons and organising classrooms effectively to capitalise on the TA training.

The programme would be delivered over one school year, and all school staff in the intervention will receive training. The strategic school improvement input for headteachers and senior leaders will be delivered by UCL Institute of Education; the staff training will be led by the University of East London; and the in-school support and coaching will be provided by National Leaders of Education (NLEs – mostly practising senior leaders) from the London Leadership Strategy.

Why are we funding it?

MITA was originally conceived in response to the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) study, which found that lower-achieving pupils receiving the most support from TAs made less progress than similar pupils receiving less TA support. The research – which feeds into the Teaching and Learning Toolkit entry on [Teaching Assistants](#) – found that, after controlling for pupil characteristics, it was the decisions made by school leaders and teachers *about* TAs, and not TAs' own actions, that best explained the findings. The findings suggest that deploying, training and preparing TAs more effectively could reverse this effect.

Recently, RCTs from the EEF and elsewhere have shown that TAs can have a positive impact on outcomes if they are deployed to deliver structured interventions. However, there are no evaluations programmes that help schools use teaching assistants in whole class settings, which is how the majority of TAs spend the majority of their time. Evaluating this research-based intervention would help to fill that gap.

How are we evaluating it?

RAND Europe has been appointed to conduct the independent evaluation, which will be an efficacy randomised controlled trial. Efficacy trials aim to test whether an intervention can work under ideal conditions (e.g. when being delivered by the intervention's original developer). UCL will recruit 100 primary schools that will be randomised to intervention or control. The intervention schools will receive a year of training and support at a subsidized price, and be expected to put that into practice in the second year.

It is a whole school intervention, but the evaluation will focus on the impact on those in Years 2 and 5 at the start of the trial (September 2017). At the end of the second year, the older cohort will sit their Key Stage 2 tests so these will be the primary outcome. The attainment of the younger pupils will be assessed again at the end of Year 3. The trial will also assess the

UCL Institute of Education

Independent Evaluator
RAND



Schools	Grant
100	£545,000

Themes

L Literacy

St Staff deployment & development

PROJECT IN PROGRESS



impact of the intervention on pupils' engagement and independent learning skills.

The implementation and process evaluation will include observations of the input for school leaders, staff training and consultancy visits in individual schools. This will continue into the second year to see if intervention schools are able to maintain their new practices in the absence of further support.

When will the evaluation report be due?

The evaluation report will be published in Summer 2020.