

Improve TA skills

The Teaching Assistant's Guide to Effective Interaction: How to maximise your practice

By Paula Bosanquet, Julie Radford and Rob Webster

Published by Routledge

ISBN 9781138856196

£22.99

Reviewed by Martin Edmonds

A number of books have been published in the wake of the 2009 Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project. This looked into how TAs were used and their impact upon learning amongst 8,200 children in 78 primary and 92 secondary schools across England. In brief, the DISS project found that the more TA support a child received, the less academic progress they made.

These unexpected findings held true even when key factors affecting academic progress, such as prior attainment, attendance and eligibility for free school meals, were taken into account. The research team from the UCL Institute of Education concluded that TA support is frequently used in unproductive ways that can negatively impact upon children's independence, resilience and ownership of their own learning.

The DISS Project led to the campaign Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA), supported by Mencap, and a book on TA deployment aimed at teachers and school leaders.

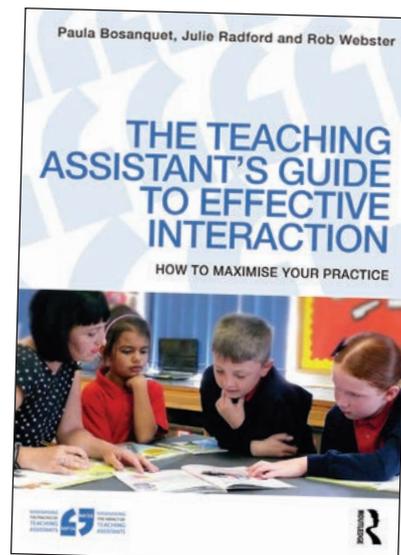
This new book presents classroom strategies developed in the light of the research and is aimed squarely at teaching assistants. Specific, practical guidance is

given on building children's abilities to engage with tasks and take responsibility for their own learning. Building pupils' resilience and the confidence to work independently is a key and recurring theme of the book and, indeed, of the entire MITA project.

Well researched and eminently practical

The Teaching Assistant's Guide to Effective Interaction would make a particularly useful course book for a CPD programme on TA deployment, as the materials are presented systematically and the chapters are liberally peppered with activities and opportunities for reflection. In effect, what is being presented here is a seven-part course for high quality classroom support.

The book starts with a detailed look at what scaffolding involves and how TAs can avoid offering so much support that the child is no longer able to work independently. Like the following chapters, the content is focused, includes



an analysis of each element and offers very specific and comprehensive suggestions of what TAs might do in certain situations. The book moves on to explore planning, engagement strategies and promoting effective group work. The final section considers the delivery of intervention programmes and assessment, tracking and record-keeping.

Any SENCO implementing the MITA recommendations would be well advised to have a copy of this book to hand. It is accessible, engaging and has a strong focus on encouraging critical reflection on practice. The strategies and approaches recommended here may challenge traditional ways of working but they are presented clearly, are well researched and are eminently practical.

Martin Edmonds is a SENCO and manages an enhanced support provision for children with a diagnosis of ASC

Insight into dyslexia

Dyslexia, Literacy and Inclusion: Child-centred perspectives

By Sean MacBlain, Louise Long and Jill Dunn

Published by Sage Publications

ISBN 9781446298435

£23.99

Reviewed by Maire McLeod

This book comprises a compilation of research to date together with practical strategies useful to student teachers and NQTs, as well as more experienced practitioners teaching children with dyslexia.

Focusing mainly on children in primary and early years settings, it

encourages teachers to put the child at the centre of everything they do and take a holistic approach towards meeting their needs. This includes placing due importance on their emotional wellbeing and understanding the social and cultural context that may compound the difficulties they face.

