

Guidelines for the Optimal Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Australian Classrooms

July 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, sea countries, and waterways from across Australia. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and living cultures; and to Elders past and present.

This Framework was agreed by Education Ministers Meeting in July 2025.

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Please cite this publication as: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2025, Guidelines for the Optimal Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Australian Classrooms, AITSL, Melbourne.

ISBN 978-1-925192-87-2

First published 2025



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AITSL was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

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Optimal deployment of teaching assistants in Australian classrooms: a summary of the seven key strategies for school leaders

Teaching assistants are dedicated school staff who provide valuable support for teachers and students. These guidelines outline seven key strategies for school leaders to optimise their impact, which are summarised below and described in full later in the document.

1. School-wide approach to deployment

Ensure the deployment of teaching assistants is part of a cohesive and collaborative strategy aimed at whole-school improvement and aligned with school improvement plans. Facilitate an inclusive and supportive educational environment by enhancing communication and collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, allocating teaching assistant time to respond to student and teacher needs and enabling teachers to engage with students requiring the most support.

2. Clear role expectations

Establish clear role expectations to foster a shared understanding of the respective roles of teachers and teaching assistants. Clear role expectations will support efficient use of teaching assistants in priority areas. It will also promote collaboration, enhance teaching assistants' job satisfaction and confidence, and support teachers to effectively delegate appropriate tasks. It will focus more of teachers' time on teaching and learning. Undertake regular reviews of roles and responsibilities to meet evolving student, staff and school needs.

3. Opportunities for collaboration

Provide ongoing opportunities for collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants to appropriately prepare teaching assistants for their role in the classroom. Collaboration will also support alignment of teaching assistants' work with lesson objectives and improvement strategies, and identify teaching assistant tasks that could assist with management of teacher workload.

4. Professional learning opportunities

Equip teaching assistants with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable impactful support in the classroom tailored to their specific professional learning needs, the targeted needs of students, those of the school and its student cohort. Provide related professional learning for teachers and school leaders to build their capabilities to effectively deploy and collaborate with teaching assistants across the school and support teaching assistants to develop effective classroom practices.

5. Implementing interventions underpinned by evidence

Actively position the work of teaching assistants in implementing the most effective evidence-based strategies within a multi-tiered system of supports approach, with a particular focus on small-group interventions that align with the specific needs of students and benefit most from engagement of teaching assistants.

6. Clear teaching and learning approach

Facilitate a shared understanding of teaching and learning approaches between teachers and teaching assistants (e.g. teaching practices, lesson content, sequencing). This shared understanding provides important context and support for the work of teaching assistants in the classroom. Focus on how teaching assistants can support development of self-directed learning skills and student independence.

7. Administrative, operational and supervisory support

Enable teachers to dedicate more time to core teaching responsibilities by considering how teaching assistants might take on tasks that are not explicitly the work of teachers as described in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Ensure that associated duties relate to teaching assistants' role in supporting teachers and students in line with broader policies and industrial instruments, and that their work complements (rather than replaces) the efforts of the teacher as instructional leader in the classroom.

Introduction

Approximately 125,000 teaching assistants working across Australia form a significant part of the school workforce (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2024).¹ They work closely with teachers and students, primarily at the classroom level.

These *Guidelines for the Optimal Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Australian Classrooms* (guidelines) represent an opportunity for schools to consider how they deploy their teaching assistants. They encourage schools to reflect on their current practice and identify opportunities for new and improved ways of deploying teaching assistants.

The guidelines are provided for use by system and sector leaders, principals, other school leaders and teachers, and teaching assistants themselves. They support principals and other school leaders to prioritise aligning the deployment of teaching assistants to support teaching and learning in the classroom. The guidelines are designed to be flexible and adaptable, to suit local contexts and student needs, taking into consideration the diverse educational contexts and unique needs of primary, secondary and special school settings.

In these guidelines, the term 'teaching assistant' encompasses a range of roles within educational settings. Distinct from roles such as business managers, administrative staff and allied health professionals, teaching assistants' roles can vary greatly and include positions such as teacher aides, education assistants, integration or inclusion aides, school learning support officers, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators working in assistant roles, among others. This usage aligns with the diverse and inclusive nature of the guidelines, acknowledging the multifaceted contributions of these roles in Australian schools.

The guidelines are informed by Australian and international research, which clearly shows that when supported and used in specific evidence-informed ways, teaching assistants can have a direct, positive impact in the classroom. They also draw on an analysis of Australian industrial instruments, and consultation with the Australian education community.

The guidelines demonstrate how teaching assistants can work directly with students, under the direction of a teacher, to facilitate students' progress and achievement. They also show how teaching assistants can enable teachers to focus on their core teaching role by undertaking important support functions that do not require a teaching qualification to complete. The guidelines offer practical strategies to enable effective deployment of teaching assistants in this regard.

The guidelines provide information that is general in nature, noting they cannot reflect the unique industrial environment in each school system and sector. However, they should be read in conjunction with industrial instruments relevant to the system or sector in which they are being used, and may serve to strengthen current approaches in line with these instruments.

A full list of research references is provided at the end of the guidelines.

¹ The figure drew data from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) which classified Preschool Aides as teaching assistants. As of December 2024, Australia utilises the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA). Preschool Aides are no longer in this classification. There is no OSCA data available at time of publication.

The work of teaching assistants

Who are teaching assistants?

Teaching assistants² are dedicated school staff who provide support for teachers and students and are known by a variety of titles in schools and educational systems and sectors across Australia. They help teachers with routine school duties, classroom activities or the care and management of students, including those with specific needs. Teaching assistants may work across multiple year levels and/or classrooms, and support one or more teachers and one or more students. They work in all school contexts, across mainstream and specialised education settings³.

While students with disability and additional needs are supported in all school contexts, the work of teaching assistants in specialised education settings may require a higher proportion of physical and personal care and life skills related duties.

A growing proportion of teaching assistants are employed to support inclusion of students with disability in mainstream settings (Sonnemann & Hunter, 2022). In 2015, the then Australian Government Department of Education and Training defined inclusive education as meaning that ‘all students are welcomed by their school in age-appropriate settings and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school’. Inclusive education practices ensure that students with disability have equal opportunities to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability (AITSL, 2020). Teaching assistants are one part of the response to student, system and school requirements for inclusive education, and their effective deployment in this regard requires consideration of a range of factors.

Teaching assistants typically work under the direction of classroom teachers and are generally managed by principals, senior and middle leaders or business managers. They do not require higher education qualifications. Approximately 51% of teaching assistants reported completing a vocational qualification. Teaching assistants are a critical part of the education workforce.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants may work with classroom teachers, community members and school visitors to provide culturally responsive educational experiences that enable students to engage with and access curriculum, participate in learning and achieve positive learning outcomes (AITSL, 2021). They may also assist teachers with community language lessons and liaise with families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

² While Early Childhood Educators could be seen as part of the teaching assistant workforce, this document has been developed for teaching assistants working in school settings.

³ The *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth) defines two forms of specialised schools:

- A **special assistance school** is one that primarily caters to students with social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties.
- A **special school** is a school that provides education under special programs, or special activities, designed specifically for students with disabilities.

Examples of teaching assistant roles across Australian schools

There are a range of roles for teaching assistants in schools in Australia and despite their differences they are officially categorised as the same occupation – Education Assistants, however, the term teaching assistants was found to be widely used in the context of schools. This document uses the term Education Assistants when referring to the official occupation category. The Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA), released in December 2024, replaces the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) and provides changes to some previous categories⁴. Under the category of Education Assistants (432), OSCA provides examples of teaching assistant classifications across Australia. (Source: *Education Assistants* | OSCA, 2024)

Below is a sample of role titles for teaching assistants used within Australian schools including several specialist roles within the Education Assistant category. Note: This list is not exhaustive.

Inclusion Support Assistant (432131)

Assists and supports children with specific developmental needs, under the direction of teaching staff, to integrate with the class and develop their social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills.

Teaching Assistant (432231)

Works under the guidance of teachers and other education professionals to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. Employed in primary and secondary schools, as well as in schools for specific purposes and other education settings, to facilitate student learning and engagement.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer (432931)

Assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their education, and supports cultural awareness and community engagement. Provides feedback to parents or guardians and teachers about students' progress, and liaises with educational bodies, government agencies and committees.

Table 1: Teaching assistant titles across Australia, as identified through an environmental scan.

Inclusion Support Assistant (432131)	Teaching Assistant (432231)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer (432931)
• Education Assistant (Special Needs) • Education Support Officer (Learning Enrichment) • Education Support Specialist	• Class Assistant • Classroom Support Officer • Education Assistant • Education Assistant (Mainstream)	• Aboriginal Community Education Officers (ACEO) • Aboriginal Education Assistant • Aboriginal Education Officer • Aboriginal Education Workers

⁴ Under the OSCA, Early Childhood Educators sit within the Early Childhood Educators and Child Carers (431) category and not the Education Assistants (432) category

• Inclusive Education Assistant • Inclusion Support Assistant • Integration Aide • Integration Assistant • Learning Assistant • Learning Intervention Assistant • Learning Support Assistant • Learning Support Officer • School Learning Support Officer • Teacher's Aide (Diversity) • Teachers Assistant (Special Learning Needs)	• School Learning Officer (Wellbeing) • Student Learning Assistant • Teacher Aide • Teacher Assistant • Teaching Assistant • Teaching Assistant (Enhanced Learning) • School Services Officer	• Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) • Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW) • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker • Aboriginal Secondary Education Transition Officers (ASETO) • Aboriginal Team Teachers • Assistant Teacher • Koorie Education Worker • Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
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What is the work of teaching assistants?

The way teaching assistants are used varies based on the needs of individual schools, the teachers and students they work with, and the industrial framework relevant to the role.

In a review of a national sample of Australian position descriptions for teaching assistants, the identification of specific duties provided insights into the work undertaken by teaching assistants.

The review analysed 59 positions, with 10 core teaching assistant duties identified, namely:

- disability support
- medical support
- student support (external to class)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge
- administrative tasks
- limited in-class instruction
- training of staff
- behaviour management support
- physical needs
- community engagement.

Teaching assistants may undertake a combination of these duties and responsibilities, dependent on the position and context in which they work. While students with disability and additional needs are supported in all school contexts, the work of teaching assistants in specialised education settings may require a higher proportion of physical and personal care and life skills related duties.

The following provides examples of some of typical teaching assistant duties found in the three OSCA education assistant classifications based on analysis of current position descriptions:

Inclusion Support Assistant⁵

- Support students with additional learning needs within the classroom, under the direction of the classroom teacher.
- Provide direct instructional support to individuals and groups of students.
- Withdraw students for assessment as appropriate.
- Implement modifications and adaptations to the learning environment or materials as directed by the classroom teacher.
- Provide support to enable students with special needs to access the curriculum and complete assignments.
- Interact sympathetically with children and their families, showing concern for the welfare and learning of all children.
- Exercise pastoral care of students by readily identifying with them.
- Participate in the activity of yard/playground duty and maintain an environment where children feel safe, both inside and outside the classroom.

⁵ Analysis based on review of 17 Inclusion Support Assistant positions.

Teaching Assistant⁶

- Provide support to teachers in the delivery of educational programs to students.
- Assist students on an individual or group basis in specific learning areas.
- Assist teachers to support participation and learning for students across the full range of physical and intellectual abilities and from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Assist student learning, where discretion and judgement is required, including providing more individualised approaches and intervention strategies, and assisting in identification of learning needs and evaluation of progress.
- Provide basic physical, social and emotional care for students, and specific personal care where necessary; for example, assistance with meals, toileting and lifting.
- Assist with the collection, preparation and distribution of learning materials.
- Work with students to use specialised technology where required.
- Support students with challenging behaviours in accordance with organisational policies and guidelines.
- Supervise students in study group or small-group activity settings.
- Undertake yard/playground duty.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer⁷

- Demonstrate, supervise and participate in activities which enhance the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children in schools and preschool centres.
- Prepare indoor and outdoor areas for learning and recreational activities assisting children with intellectual, physical and behavioural difficulties with their academic studies.
- Assist with preparing teaching aids, and copying and collating written and printed material.
- Provide assistance to individual and small groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Provide home–school liaison and counselling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

In addition to the roles detailed above, bilingual or multilingual teaching assistants can also support students learning English as an additional language or dialect. Teaching assistants proficient in Auslan can significantly contribute to the educational experiences of students who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing instruction in both Auslan and English.

⁶ Analysis based on review of 15 Teaching Assistant positions.

⁷ Analysis based on review of 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer positions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants⁸ may work in partnership with classroom teachers, combining knowledge and practice with specific community understanding. They often work in schools within culturally-rich communities and authentically connect schools with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to promote educational opportunities and respect for cultural ways of knowing, being and doing (Gruppetta et al., 2018, p. 3).

Across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants are employed under a variety of titles depending on the context and the state or territory in which they work. Table 2 below illustrates a non-exhaustive sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistant roles found throughout Australia and titles by state and territory.

Table 2: List of examples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander roles found in the AITSL desktop review of government, Catholic and independent teaching assistant positions in Australia.

Position title examples	State and sector
Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO)	NSW, government
School Officer – Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW) Inclusion Support Assistant School Officer – Teacher Assistant	NT, Catholic
Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO)	SA, government
Aboriginal Secondary Education Transition Officer (ASETO)	SA, government
Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)	TAS, government
Community Education Counsellor (CEC) Assistant Teacher (AT)	QLD, government
Indigenous Liaison Officer (ILO) First Nations Education School Officer (FNESO)	QLD, Catholic
Home–School Liaison Officer Indigenous Boarding Supervisor Remote Communities Liaison Officer	QLD, independent
Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESO)	VIC, government & Catholic

⁸ AITSL acknowledges that there are a wide range of identified teaching assistant positions throughout Australian schools, and that these positions each encompass a range of unique requirements and duties pertaining to the local cultural histories and knowledges of the Traditional Owners of the lands on which these schools are situated.

Recognising the diversity of these roles, these guidelines use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants' to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff who work alongside registered classroom teachers in schools with high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They are not intended for those whose main responsibility is classroom teaching.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO)	WA, government
Aboriginal Teacher Assistants (ATA)	WA, Catholic
Community Teachers	

The Spotlight evidence summary developed by AITSL, [The impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators](#), provides further details on the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants.

What impact can teaching assistants have on student progress and achievement and teacher workload?

Research suggests that when deployed effectively, teaching assistants can contribute to a lift in student progress and achievement, and teacher workload reduction.

The effectiveness of teaching assistants' work varies based on several factors. Notably, their impact is most effective when they are involved in structured, targeted interventions rather than general classroom duties (Blatchford et al, 2009).

Key factors influencing the effectiveness of teaching assistants' work include (Evidence for Learning, 2021):

- engagement in focused, evidence-based interventions in specific areas, such as literacy and numeracy support
- matching skills and training with assigned tasks, based on the needs within the school
- access to high-quality training and professional learning, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills
- clear delineation of roles, ensuring they complement (rather than replace) teacher efforts
- flexibility and responsiveness to diverse student needs, facilitating peer interactions and supporting students with disability to have meaningful engagement with qualified teachers
- balanced provision of direct support and systematic skills development to foster independence among students
- regular collaboration and planning with teachers to develop understanding of need, and align strategies and approaches.

Research also shows that teaching assistants can support teacher workload reduction, particularly when their roles are well defined and strategically aligned with teaching objectives. This can come in a variety of forms described below:

Direct student support:

Teaching assistants can provide direct support to students, under the direction of teachers, especially in one-to-one or small-group settings such as via the [multi-tiered system of supports \(MTSS\)](#) model. This targeted approach can aid student learning and allow teachers to focus on planning and delivering comprehensive lessons. The effectiveness of this support is amplified when teaching assistants are equipped with specialised training and skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy (Blatchford et al., 2009; Evidence for Learning, 2019).

Administrative and organisational tasks:

Teaching assistants can handle specific administrative and organisational tasks, particularly where these relate to their role in supporting students and teachers in the classroom. This can enable teachers to concentrate more on core teaching duties, enhancing overall classroom efficiency (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], n.d.). It is important that appropriate guidance, training or professional development is provided before new tasks are allocated to teaching assistants.

Behavioural and classroom management:

Teaching assistants can support the teacher in managing classroom behaviour where clear directions and procedures have been provided. Teaching assistants' involvement in maintaining a positive learning environment can free up teachers to provide uninterrupted and focused instruction, improving the learning environment for all students (Blatchford et al., 2009). Behaviour management can be a workload issue for both the classroom teacher and teaching assistant alike, including the need for documentation and communication. While teachers remain primarily responsible for behaviour and classroom management, teaching assistants can provide additional support.

Collaboration:

Regular collaborative opportunities between teachers and teaching assistants can ensure teaching assistants' contributions are effectively integrated into classroom planning. This partnership is essential for maximising the impact of teaching assistants in reducing teacher workload (Evidence for Learning, 2019).

Teachers report that teaching assistants can help alleviate stress and enhance job satisfaction, in part due to their ability to support the teacher to effectively manage classroom disruptions, allowing teachers more time to focus on teaching (EEF, n.d.). Teachers also report that the initial effort they invest in planning with teaching assistants can be offset by the resulting benefits and advantages of having a teaching assistant for support (Webster et al., 2013).

Teachers recognise the valuable contribution of teaching assistants in supporting learning, particularly for students who require additional assistance. This support can ease teacher workload, while also aligning with evidence suggesting that when teachers are free to concentrate on core teaching functions, student outcomes may improve (EEF, n.d.).

A strong presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools enhances Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' sense of belonging to the school community and gives students visible access to role models (Anderson et al., 2022; Casinader & Walsh, 2015). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants are particularly important in remote Australian communities and schools with high populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and evidence shows they are key contributors to positive education outcomes (AITSL, 2021).

Seven key strategies to support optimal deployment of teaching assistants

Teaching assistants already make a strong contribution in schools across Australia, supporting both students and teachers. However, understanding the most effective ways of deploying teaching assistants is crucial to optimise their impact.

Seven key strategies for optimal deployment of teaching assistants have been identified in Figure 1 below, and are separately described in detail below the figure. By drawing on these strategies, leaders and teachers can select the best option from their toolkit to deploy teaching assistants in their context.

Grounded in extensive research, these strategies are categorised into school-wide and classroom-based approaches. The strategies outlined are designed to maximise the effectiveness of teaching assistants in enhancing student progress and achievement and reducing teacher workload, with teachers maintaining ownership for the instruction and learning of all students.

‘Encouragingly, research is showing that schools can make relatively straightforward changes that enable TAs [teaching assistants] to work much more effectively, in ways that can have a potentially transformative effect on student outcomes.’

Evidence for Learning 2022, p.15

Figure 1: Seven strategies to support optimal deployment of teaching assistants

School-wide strategies			
1. School-wide approach to deployment	2. Clear role expectations	3. Opportunities for collaboration	4. Professional learning opportunities
Classroom-based strategies			
5. Implementing interventions underpinned by evidence	6. Clear teaching and learning approach	7. Administrative, operational and supervisory support	
Support workload reduction and a lift in student progress and achievement			

School-wide strategies to maximise the effectiveness of teaching assistants

Strategy 1. School-wide approach to deployment

A school-wide approach to deployment of teaching assistants ensures a strategic and coordinated allocation of teaching assistants across classrooms to provide consistent and targeted assistance, aligned with the overall goals and needs of students and the school.

Implementing a school-wide approach facilitates the creation of an inclusive and supportive educational environment, while also:

- enhancing communication, and supporting collaborative processes and working relationships, between teachers and teaching assistants
- ensuring allocation of teaching assistants' time is aligned to the needs of students and teachers within the classroom, and at the school level
- enabling students requiring the most support to receive equitable attention from teachers.

Consideration should be given to:

Existing supports: identifying and leveraging currently-available supports, such as special education teachers, literacy/numeracy coaches and allied health professionals⁹ (where applicable), to align supports with the needs of students before considering the allocation of teaching assistants.

Capability alignment: identifying the skills, knowledge and dispositions of teaching assistants, and determining which teachers and students they may be best placed to work with.

Strategic placement: taking the number of students with additional support needs and types of needs they have into account in placement and deployment of teaching assistants.

Positive partnerships: encouraging development of partnerships between teaching assistants and teachers to enhance cohesion and effectiveness in supporting teaching and learning.

Collaborative dynamics: determining the ways in which collaboration can occur between teachers and teaching assistants, including how timetabling can allow for collaboration.

Responsive support: enabling teaching assistants to work responsively to meet student needs, fostering development of skills for student independence and peer interaction, while providing targeted support.

Inclusive practices: promoting inclusive practices that ensure students receiving support are not separated from their peers and allow space for peer interactions, fostering an inclusive and equitable classroom environment.

Additional support: using teaching assistants as additional support within the classroom rather than alternative support to teachers, especially when supporting student inclusion.

⁹ Allied health professionals are bound by legal and ethical requirements. Any recommendations or information shared regarding individual students must be subject to informed consent and relevant confidentiality protocols.

'Schools should try and organise staff so that the students who struggle most have as much time with the teacher as others.'

Evidence for Learning 2019, p.10



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan government secondary college – Strategy 1: School-wide approach to deployment

A government secondary college in metropolitan Western Australia is dedicated to a school-wide approach to teaching assistant deployment, visible through the school's shared ownership of student growth with collegial collaboration and support.

Teaching assistants are strategically matched to subject levels, teachers and students according to their skills, knowledge and dispositions, and are managed within subject department-based teams. With a focus on building and supporting independent learning, teaching assistants are included where possible in curriculum and operational planning and as part of school committees.

The school provides support for all students by flexibly responding to needs of the whole cohort, including discrete support for students with additional needs, where appropriate. Whilst roles are clearly defined within departments, teaching assistants are encouraged to demonstrate agency by participating in professional dialogue with teachers to ensure observational data is collected and considered. Further to this, teaching assistants work closely to assist teachers within their subject departments in the production and application of teaching resources.

School sector: Government

Location: Metropolitan Western Australia

School type: Secondary

Strategy 2. Clear role expectations

Clearly-defined role expectations for teaching assistants provide explicit information about their responsibilities and tasks. Clear role expectations can benefit both teachers and teaching assistants, and support student progress and achievement by:

- fostering a shared understanding of respective roles, reducing ambiguity in the classroom
- facilitating efficient use of teaching assistants' knowledge, skills and dispositions
- promoting collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants
- enhancing teaching assistants' job satisfaction and confidence
- supporting teachers to effectively delegate appropriate tasks to teaching assistants
- allowing teachers to focus more time on the core functions of teaching and learning.

Regularly scheduled reviews of roles and responsibilities allow for adaptation of roles to meet evolving student, staff and school needs, further increasing teaching assistants' impact.

Consideration should be given to:

Unified understanding: sharing role definitions and expectations to ensure all staff have a common understanding of the roles of teaching assistants and teachers within the school.

Adaptive review processes: providing opportunities to regularly review role expectations, allowing schools to accommodate changing needs and contexts.

Supplementary role emphasis: ensuring leaders reinforce teaching assistants' roles in supplementing the role of the teacher, not replacing them.

Community engagement: specifying where teaching assistants who have strong community connections can support family–school relationships where appropriate.

Families/carers: assisting families/carers to understand the roles and responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants in supporting student learning and wellbeing, especially where teaching assistants are part of supporting student inclusion.



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan Catholic middle and secondary college – Strategy 2: Clear role expectations

A Catholic middle and secondary college in metropolitan Queensland has developed a holistic approach to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of their non-teaching staff. This process involves a transparent review of all positions within the school, building in opportunities for staff to reflect and compare their role descriptions to their own experiences.

The process begins with pre-term planning, allowing staff to closely examine their position descriptions and corresponding classification levels during a dedicated staff meeting. In smaller groups, staff discuss their roles, focusing on accountability and responsibility. The teaching assistant group meets to discuss where they see themselves in relation to accountability, responsibility and guidance within their work.

This initial discussion is followed by a period of reflection, leading to a comprehensive self-assessment of their skills, contributions to the school, and areas for improvement. Line managers also engage in this process to ensure alignment in perspectives.

Subsequent meetings between teaching assistants and their line managers facilitate a dialogue on professional development needs, with the school's human resources team providing support in identifying relevant courses or resources. This personalised process allows teaching assistants to focus on developing knowledge and skills they need to perform their role.

This process not only clarifies roles for teaching assistants, but also sets the foundation for developing personalised professional development plans, ensuring teaching assistants are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for their roles.

School sector: Catholic

Location: Metropolitan Queensland

School type: Middle and secondary, Years 5–12

Strategy 3. Opportunities for collaboration

Communication is crucial for effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, and to ensure teaching assistants are well prepared to provide support within the classroom. It enables teachers and teaching assistants to discuss individual student progress and specific needs, including any individual behaviour management approaches, lesson content and skills to be taught, and for teachers to share lesson plans and teaching approaches. This ensures teaching assistants are prepared for their role in the classroom, and their role in supporting the teacher and students.

Opportunities for collaboration foster open communication and partnership building. They enable teachers to set clear expectations and align teaching assistants' daily tasks with overall lesson objectives. Collaboration opportunities also support identification of areas where teaching assistants may benefit from additional training or professional learning.

Discussions can also streamline workflow between teachers and teaching assistants, synchronising their efforts and enabling teachers to identify appropriate tasks for the teaching assistant which could assist to reduce teacher workload.

Collaboration and liaison between teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals can enable more structured support for students, especially students with disability.

Consideration should be given to:

Strategic scheduling: strategically allocating teaching assistants' time, fostering consistent engagement with individual students, specific student cohorts and teachers.

Planned collaboration: determining how to enable regular opportunities for collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants so they can discuss lesson and unit plans, student learning plans, and adjustments and differentiation strategies. This may be a longer opportunity at the start or end of term for strategic items and/or short weekly meetings to enable agile responses to emergent needs, within the regular working hours of the staff involved.

Leadership support: school leaders supporting teachers to effectively direct and utilise teaching assistants in their classrooms, and facilitating effective evaluation of school-wide strategies.

Continuity and transition: providing for structured handovers between teaching assistants, and between teachers and teaching assistants, at key points in the year such as term, semester, and end-of-year transitions to maintain continuity in student support.

Innovative collaboration: considering innovative ways to record student needs and lesson planning, such as use of technology, including ensuring that teaching assistants have access to these tools.

Collaboration to support inclusion: considering when and how collaboration between teachers, teaching assistants, families/carers and other professionals can be best utilised to support inclusion for students with disability.



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan Catholic primary school – Strategy 3: Opportunities for collaboration

A Catholic primary school in metropolitan Victoria promotes an explicit teaching and learning approach throughout the school. This is underscored by school-wide professional development, timetabled collaborative planning time and consistent routines. A collaborative teacher/teaching assistant coaching model is used to support induction. Students with disabilities are individually case-managed.

All staff receive training in any new teaching and learning initiatives considered by the school, such as the case management framework for students with disability, to allow all staff to have consistent practice.

As part of their induction, teachers support new teaching assistants through a coaching and mentoring model which provides regular opportunities for collaborative planning, reflection, evaluation and debriefing together. As another aspect of teaching assistant induction, when new teaching assistants first come into the school, they shadow teachers and other teaching assistants. This also helps to establish a collaborative approach.

Once the teaching assistants are allocated to a teacher, they shadow them to better understand the teacher's ways of working and student needs. The teacher and newly-allocated teaching assistant develop agreed actions, such as the approach to supporting student behaviour and pedagogy. The teacher also identifies key documents relevant to the student/class.

Planning time is allocated on a weekly basis for teaching assistants to join teachers for part of their teaching team planning time. The collaborative planning time between teachers and teaching assistants enables them to clarify activities, review adjustments, and identify support which is required to achieve learning goals. Collaboratively, the teacher and teaching assistant consider one-on-one and small-group support and record intentions in the planning document. They locate or sometimes create any learning materials which may be required during the planning time, if possible.

The school maintains a consistent approach to supporting students in their learning by embedding a clear framework for scaffolding interactions between teachers, teaching assistants and students. This framework identifies specific practices that support an increase in student autonomy through a gradual continuum of learning support. Together, middle leaders and teachers strategically plan effective lessons, focusing on ways teachers and teaching assistants can nurture learner independence and enhance overall capacity. Collaboratively developing these processes and routines, the school cultivates a shared vision of exemplary teaching and learning across its community.

School sector: Catholic

Location: Metropolitan Victoria

School type: Primary

Strategy 4. Professional learning opportunities

Ongoing professional learning opportunities can ensure teaching assistants are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support students and teachers. Through professional learning and access to relevant resources, teaching assistants can enhance their knowledge and skills, and keep updated on effective teaching and learning practices. This contributes to high-quality interactions with students and their collaborating teachers and can play a role in improving educational outcomes.

Where teaching assistants are supporting students with disability, their effectiveness hinges on a deep understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities present in supporting these students. It is critical to ensure teaching assistants are equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to meet these demands effectively and contribute meaningfully to the educational, health and social development of students.

Professional learning for teaching assistants should be tailored to their specific needs, the contexts in which they work, students they work with, and the specific duties they undertake. It may cover areas such as:

- effectively supporting learning
- managing student behaviour
- data collection and developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- communicating effectively with a range of school staff
- strategies to engage students
- strategies to support social, emotional and behavioural development
- cultural responsiveness
- cultural identity and safety
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- understanding duty of care requirements
- relevant legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- application of assistive technologies
- delivering social and emotional support
- physical support including tube feeding and assisting with self-care tasks.

Professional learning for teaching assistants can be supplemented with related professional learning for teachers and school leaders, contributing to appropriate support and utilisation of teaching assistants. This can build school leader and teacher capabilities to:

- understand the critical role teaching assistants play within the school
- effectively deploy teaching assistants across the school and within specific classrooms
- support teaching assistants to develop effective classroom practices
- develop and maintain effective collaboration and working relationships with teaching assistants.

Professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants should be offered in line with relevant industrial instruments, within regular work hours or on student-free/staff professional learning days.

Consideration should be given to:

Comprehensive induction: providing for comprehensive orientation and induction of teaching assistants, which clearly articulates system outcomes and supports, policy and legislative requirements, school-level objectives, strategies employed by the school to lift student progress and achievement and the important role of the teaching assistant within this context.

Whole school professional learning: offering professional learning through whole-school events (e.g. student-free/staff professional learning days) to support consistency in practice across the school and to allow for teaching assistant involvement in teachers' professional learning opportunities, where appropriate.

Specific and relevant opportunities: providing relevant professional learning opportunities and resources for teaching assistants, tailored to their capability development requirements, consistent with evidence on effective deployment strategies and in line with industrial parameters.

Connected learning: providing thorough training on the specific interventions teaching assistants will be delivering, addressing both the content knowledge of the interventions and the related skills teaching assistants will need to engage students effectively and adapt their interactions to meet individual learning needs, under the direction of a teacher.

Scaffolded learning: supporting professional learning for teaching assistants within the school environment and as part of day-to-day practice, including through observation and feedback on their practice, and performance and development plans and conversations.



CASE STUDY

A regional government secondary school – Strategy 4: Professional learning opportunities

At a regional government secondary school in New South Wales, the commitment to enhancing the knowledge and skills of teaching assistants and esteeming their work is evident in the school's comprehensive professional development program.

This program, initiated by a teaching assistant with extensive experience, is designed to provide teaching assistants with a comprehensive understanding of their roles within the school, while also introducing them to the school's culture, values, and routines. The focus is on ensuring that each teaching assistant is fully prepared to contribute effectively to the school community.

The school has also instituted a structured mentoring program, where more experienced teaching assistants guide newcomers through the complexities of their roles, offering advice, sharing evidence-based practice, and providing feedback.

Regular, timetabled professional learning sessions for teaching assistants are held bi-weekly in work hours and focus on a variety of topics, from classroom management techniques to strategies for supporting students with diverse needs. These sessions are often led by external experts or through collaboration with educational organisations, ensuring that the content is relevant, up-to-date, and practical.

School sector: Government

Location: Regional New South Wales

School type: Secondary

Classroom-based strategies to support the optimal deployment of teaching assistants

Strategy 5. Implementing interventions underpinned by evidence

It is important that a strong evidence-base underpins the strategies used by teaching assistants to support student progress and achievement. Research shows the profound impact that targeted, evidence-based interventions – when delivered by well-trained teaching assistants to supplement whole-class instruction – can have on student progress and achievement. Such interventions, particularly in literacy and numeracy, are critical for personalised student support, significantly influencing learning outcomes (Alborz et al., 2009; EEF, 2018; Sonnemann & Hunter, 2023).

Staff delivering small-group interventions to a group of students with a common identified need may be led by teachers, teaching assistants or other trained staff members. Where a teaching assistant is running an intervention, this must always be overseen by a teacher, who has the core responsibility for monitoring learning progress and intervention adjustment.

All staff members involved in an intervention should (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2023. In Australian Education Research Organisation [AERO] 2024a):

- be trained in the domain-specific intervention and supported by the school to deliver the intervention program
- understand how to use data to inform instruction. This includes the capacity to frequently monitor progress using curriculum-based assessments
- use progress data to adjust interventions as required.

By leveraging the specialised skills of teaching assistants within a framework of rigorous research-informed and collaborative practice, schools can effectively address the diverse learning needs of their students, thereby laying a solid foundation for success. Timetabling interventions into school schedules is important to normalise intervention classes. (AERO, 2024a).

Use of evidence-based interventions can sit well within the multi-tiered system of supports framework.

Multi-tiered system of support

The [multi-tiered system of supports \(MTSS\)](#) framework, developed from the *Response to Intervention* model, can provide a structured model to guide optimal deployment of teaching assistants, particularly for improving literacy and numeracy skills in students. MTSS is a tiered approach to providing educational support, characterised by a continuum of evidence-based practices matched to student needs. It is used to manage cognitive load of learning tasks, maximise retention, consolidation and application, and foster the conditions of a learning-focused environment (AERO, 2024a).

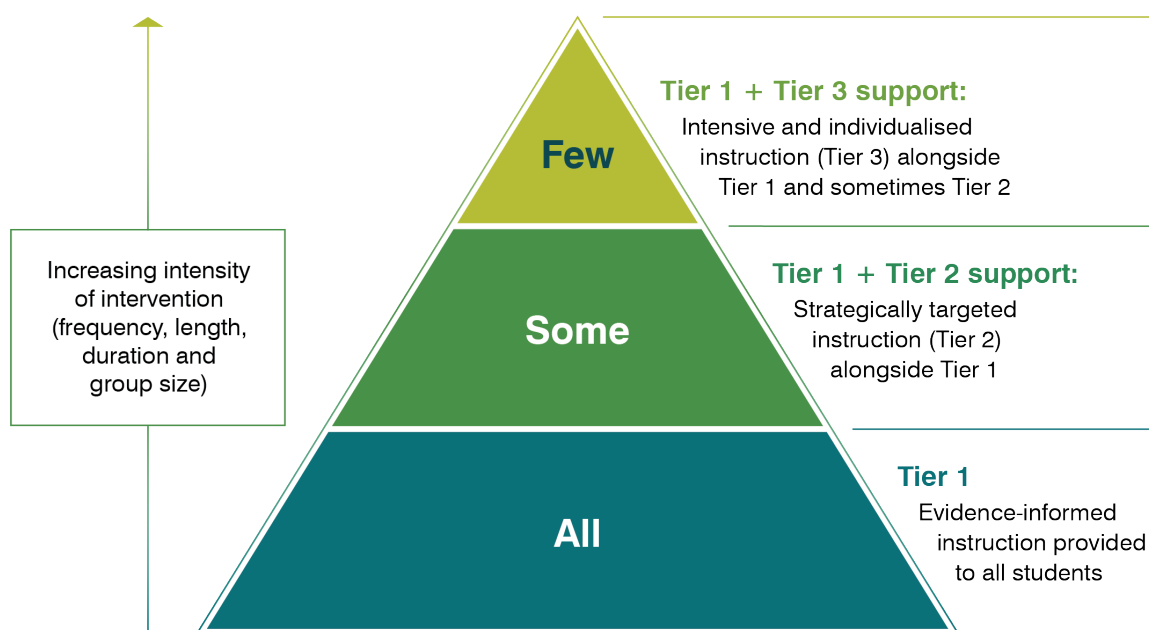
The MTSS approach promotes timely intervention as students move between 'tiers' of support, based on ongoing progress monitoring and application of clear criteria for commencing and exiting interventions (AERO, 2024b). It incorporates:

Universal, evidence-based strategies which are implemented to pre-emptively address academic and social challenges (Tier 1).

Increased support which is provided for students showing early signs of difficulty (Tier 2).

Highly customised interventions which are designed for students needing specific, tailored support (Tier 3).

Figure 2: Multi-tiered system of supports. Source: AERO, 2024b



Teaching assistants, with appropriate capabilities and training, can play a particularly important role in delivering targeted support to small groups or individual students in this model. For effective implementation, teaching assistants should be trained to deliver the appropriate evidence-based instructional interventions, and the teacher should take responsibility for progress monitoring and intervention adjustment.

Teaching assistants can be very effective in providing evidence-based, small-group interventions, targeting key skills in literacy and numeracy in particular. These Tier 2 interventions should be structured to offer more intensive instruction and practice, drawing on teacher expertise to direct and oversee instruction, teaching assistants' specialised training, and the latest research in targeted evidence-based interventions or small-group tutoring. Three time-based factors (frequency, length and duration) of interventions must be considered, as well as the group size (AERO, 2024a). Group sizes of no larger than six students are ideal. Groups larger than seven students show a reduction in effectiveness (EEF, n.d.).

For students who have intensive additional learning needs, in some instances, teaching assistants who are trained in these specific interventions and have appropriate capability sets can deliver one-on-one or very small group (no more than 3 students) Tier 3 support, overseen by the classroom teacher or an allied health professional. This may include multi-sensory instructional strategies or support for students with specific learning disabilities or language needs. Care must be taken to ensure students with the greatest needs are supported by the most qualified, skilled and experienced professionals.

Ongoing professional learning, and collaborative planning and feedback with teachers (discussed above), can support tiered interventions to be seamlessly integrated into the broader instructional program and responsive to each students' progress.

Interdisciplinary leadership is effective where teachers or other allied health professionals jointly lead the decision-making process regarding the entry and exit of students into specific intervention tiers (Porter, 2022. In AERO, 2024a). Collaboration between teaching assistants and teachers should include regular discussions on student assessment, progress monitoring, and the adjustment of support strategies to ensure targeted and dynamic responses to individual learning needs.

Consideration should be given to (AERO, 2024a):

Engagement within an MTSS approach: engaging teaching assistants within an MTSS approach, including by targeting their professional development and working towards evidence-based interventions at appropriate levels of support, and ensuring advice from other specialised allied health professionals is included in decision making where relevant.

Integration with classroom teaching: creating a cohesive learning experience by ensuring interventions delivered by teaching assistants complement and reinforce classroom teaching.

Systematic identification of interventions: school leaders and teachers should carefully select evidence-based intervention programs that align with the specific needs of students and benefit most from engagement of teaching assistants.

Comprehensive professional learning on interventions: providing teaching assistants with thorough training on the intervention programs they will be delivering. This training should not only cover the content of the interventions but also equip teaching assistants with the skills to engage students effectively and adapt their interactions to meet individual learning needs while delivering the intervention with fidelity, under the direction of a teacher.

Feedback and adaptation: engaging teaching assistants in collecting data and feedback on effectiveness of interventions, contributing to continual refinement of strategies to maximise impact on student learning.

Selection of teaching assistants: considering the capabilities of teaching assistants when a decision to allocate them to implement an intervention is made. This may include consideration of appropriate levels of English literacy and numeracy and prior learning when more complex content is the subject of the learning support.

Resources and planning: conducting the necessary planning and garnering appropriate resources to support ongoing implementation of an MTSS framework, with adherence to student supervision requirements.



CASE STUDY

A regional Catholic primary school – Strategy 5: Implementing interventions underpinned by evidence

A regional Catholic primary school in Victoria uses an evidence-based intervention program structured on an MTSS approach. Teaching assistants are key to the implementation of this program.

The school provides relevant training to the teaching assistants to prepare them to conduct interventions. As a component of the intervention, the teaching assistant collects data which is shared with the relevant middle leaders, teachers and allied health specialists who work together with the teaching assistant to evaluate and monitor student progress on a regular basis. This targeted approach considers the skills, needs and the level of adjustment for the student under the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), within the following structure:

Tier 1 support is embedded through in-class, high-quality differentiated teaching.

Tier 2 support involves teaching assistants delivering one-on-one and small-group guidance through early exposure to new concepts, as well as repetition of class instruction to facilitate long-term understanding.

Tier 3 support is for individual students or very small groups of up to three students. It is built around specific research-informed literacy programs that are managed and conducted by a specially-trained teaching assistant, who works under the guidance of a teacher.

The school facilitates a 30-minute meeting every fortnight for teachers and teaching assistants to discuss the interventions during school hours with the responsible middle leader. They also pay teaching assistants to attend professional learning and team meetings. These collaborative opportunities assist teachers to continually monitor student progress and make adjustments where needed.

School sector: Catholic

Location: Regional Victoria

School type: Primary

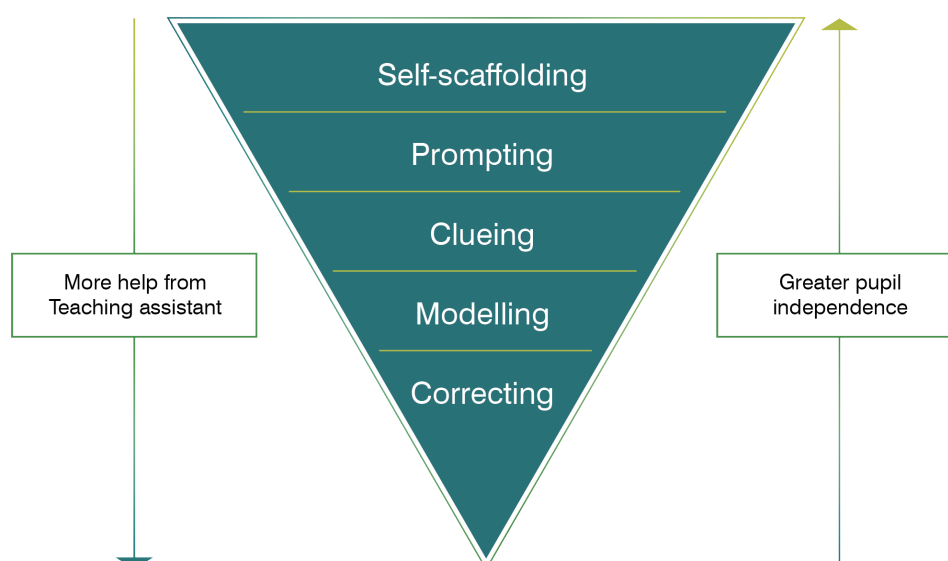
Strategy 6. Clear teaching and learning approach

When teachers share their evidence-based approach to teaching and learning, they support and provide important context for the work of teaching assistants within the classroom. This includes offering detailed guidance on evidence-based teaching practices, lesson content, sequencing, and techniques to nurture independent learning skills among students. Sharing this information contributes to a common understanding of student needs and the educational environment. It can also strengthen the partnership between teachers and teaching assistants, leading to a consistent classroom management and communication approach.

The Education Endowment Foundation's scaffolding framework (Figure 3 below) is designed to enhance the interactions between teaching assistants and students, focusing on the development of self-directed learning skills. By elevating the quality of conversations teaching assistants have with students, they can significantly contribute to fostering students' abilities to learn independently. This approach emphasises the importance of teaching assistants in supporting tasks that challenge students appropriately, encouraging them to manage their learning through self-scaffolding before intervening with minimal assistance to promote independence and problem-solving skills (EEF, 2018, p.15).

Teaching assistants should start at the top of the hierarchy and observe students. If the student is unable to progress, teaching assistants should then intervene utilising the least amount of support first, before moving down the levels. (EEF, 2018, p.15)

Figure 3: Scaffolding framework for teaching assistant–student interactions. Source: EEF, 2018



Hierarchy of teaching assistant activities that promote students' autonomy and independence

Self-scaffolding: Teaching assistants observe, giving students time for processing and thinking. Self-scaffolders can plan how to approach a task, problem-solve as they go and review how they approached a task.

Prompting: Teaching assistants provide prompts when students are unable to self-scaffold. Prompts encourage students to draw on their own knowledge, but refrain from specifying a strategy. The aim is to nudge students into deploying a self-scaffolding technique. For example: "What do you need to do first? What's your plan? You can do this!"

Clueing: Often students know the strategies or knowledge required to solve a problem, but find it difficult to call them to mind. Clues worded as questions provide a hint in the right direction. The answer must contain a key piece of information to help students work out how to move forward. Always start with a small clue.

Modelling: Prompts and clues can be ineffective when students encounter a task that requires a new skill or strategy. Teaching assistants, as confident and competent experts, can model while students actively watch and listen. Students should try the same step for themselves immediately afterwards.

Correcting: This involves providing answers and requires no independent thinking. Occasionally it is appropriate to do this, however, teaching assistants should always aim instead to model and encourage students to apply new skills or knowledge first.

Consideration should be given to:

Shared understanding of practice: encouraging the exchange of evidence-based teaching and learning strategies between leaders, teachers and teaching assistants to cultivate a shared understanding of effective educational practices.

Shared understanding of content: informing teaching assistants about lesson content, sequencing, and techniques to nurture independent learning skills among students, to ensure teachers and teaching assistants are working together to deliver the same outcome in the classroom.

Promoting student independence: applying a scaffolding framework for teaching assistants to promote student independence at appropriate points in engaging with students in the classroom.

Shared approach to learning behaviours: highlighting the importance of teachers working alongside teaching assistants to encourage students' positive learning behaviours, such as risk-taking and question-asking, to foster independence and resilience.

Shared strategies for conceptual understanding: providing guidance to teaching assistants on facilitating students' comprehension of underlying concepts through dynamic, open-ended questioning to move beyond task execution as the key outcome.



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan government school for specific purpose – Strategy 6: Clear teaching and learning approach

A metropolitan government school for specific purpose (SSP) in New South Wales provides high-intensity educational support for students with moderate to high learning needs. The structure of the school focuses around four learning areas, called blocks, which each contain four classes. These blocks are organised according to the learning levels and needs of students, each guided by a dedicated assistant principal.

The school implements a whole-school, clear teaching and learning approach that integrates teaching assistants into educational planning, ensuring that all initiatives are collaboratively supported and aligned with the school's overall goals.

To ensure new teaching assistants understand school policies, an induction process and role-specific handbook are provided. All staff, including teaching assistants, participate in strategic direction teams that are aligned to the school improvement plan and are allocated regular weekly time to meet.

The school supports whole-school collaboration further by aligning all blocks under a common communication system, keeping all staff informed and on track to participate in whole-school initiatives.

Professional growth is a cornerstone of the school's ethos. Teaching assistants benefit from professional learning plans (PLPs) designed to set and achieve career objectives, supported by customised professional learning opportunities. Additionally, teaching assistants are afforded a bi-weekly two-hour period for professional development activities.

Teaching assistants participate in daily team planning sessions, which reinforce a shared understanding of teaching strategies and student engagement techniques. Through these practices, the school exemplifies a clear teaching and learning approach, where teaching assistants are integral to delivering consistent and effective educational support.

School sector: Government

Location: Metropolitan, New South Wales

School type: School for specific purpose (SSP)

Strategy 7. Administrative, operational and supervisory support

There are a range of administrative, operational, and supervisory tasks often undertaken by teachers. Many of these tasks are not explicitly the work of teachers as described in the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Teacher Standards) and could instead be undertaken by teaching assistants. This could enable teachers to dedicate more time to their core teaching responsibilities, but care should be taken to ensure that any associated administrative duties relate to teaching assistants' role in supporting teachers and students within their specific context and are in line with broader policies, requirements and industrial instruments.

Examples of tasks that may be suitable for teaching assistants to undertake, depending on relevant policy and industrial frameworks (e.g. working hours) and teaching assistant capabilities, include:

- assisting with data entry, documentation and record-keeping
- organising equipment and resources for lessons (including printing or photocopying, setting up learning activities, etc.)

- supervising students during sports, library sessions, and yard/playground duties
- providing first aid
- communicating with families/carers within the school's agreed policies and processes.

Consideration should be given to:

Support for instruction: clearly aligning administrative tasks undertaken by teaching assistants with desired instructional outcomes.

Task negotiation and allocation: exploring ways schools can facilitate discussion and distribution of tasks between teachers and teaching assistants and providing any additional training to teaching assistants if required to undertake the tasks.

Enhancing administrative efficiency: reviewing and streamlining current administrative processes and tasks to optimise the use of teaching assistants' time to support educational activities.

Policy and supervision frameworks: aligning practices with existing policies and procedures at both the system/sector and school levels, particularly concerning student supervision requirements.



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan independent primary and middle school – Strategy 7: Administrative, operational and supervisory support

At a metropolitan independent primary and middle years school in Western Australia, all staff are included in the development and maintenance of the school's teaching and learning approach. This is facilitated by the way the school encourages and fosters strong partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants.

An important aspect of the school's approach to deployment of teaching assistants is that they provide teachers with a range of assistance, including administrative support such as photocopying, making resources, managing supplies and completing the roll. These tasks are directed when needed, so that the teacher is able to attend to student learning.

When new teaching assistants are inducted into the school, they are offered professional learning resources and opportunities to attend formal courses. This contributes to a shared understanding of how the school facilitates independent learning, whilst supporting students with additional needs.

School sector: Independent

Location: Metropolitan Western Australia

School type: Primary and middle, ages 3–15



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan government secondary college – Strategy 7: Administrative, operational and supervisory support

At a metropolitan government secondary college in Queensland, the deployment of teaching assistants is strategically planned to support teachers and deliver quality teaching and learning for students.

The majority of teaching assistants are placed within classrooms and in intervention programs. Placement is coordinated by the business manager and organised through a transparent process that monitors and prioritises the level of student need. The level of student need is determined by a combination of academic performance, attendance, socioeconomic context and learning needs.

Further to this, the school deploys a quarter of their teaching assistants in operational support roles where they take on tasks such as organising and assisting students to undertake vocational education and training (VET) placements. This allows them to support students in a non-curriculum capacity to obtain VET qualifications/competencies, and for teachers to focus solely on developing quality teaching and learning practices.

Using data, the school facilitates regular teaching assistant meetings to unpack and evaluate student progress. Consideration is being given to how technological solutions could be used to streamline access to data and other important information so that teaching assistants, teachers and leaders all have the opportunity to work efficiently from a quick and reliable source.

School sector: Government

Location: Metropolitan Queensland

School type: Secondary

Effectively implementing the seven strategies

Each of the seven strategies outlined above needs careful planning to enable effective implementation. The seven strategies can be used to adapt and strengthen current approaches to deployment of teaching assistants. Implementing change requires a thoughtful and strategic approach, taking into account each school's specific needs.

Effective implementation of these strategies requires employer support and for school leaders to reflect on:

- the current deployment of teaching assistants throughout the school
- insights from research on the optimal use of teaching assistants
- specific policy requirements and regulatory frameworks
- funding arrangements for specific students
- current school priorities and improvement plans
- current school policies, procedures and systems
- relevant industrial instruments, most often represented in schools through enterprise bargaining agreements, industrial awards and role descriptions

- identified manageable and incremental steps that can be taken to implement the selected strategies.

When refining a school's deployment strategy for teaching assistants, it is essential to align their roles with the goal of enhancing educational outcomes for all students, especially those requiring additional support. It is important to consider that when teaching assistants are deployed to support meaningful student inclusion, safety and belonging, this support goes beyond co-location and integration, to ensure inclusive practices, environment, resourcing and communication.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants

Building on the seven school-wide and classroom-based strategies above, deployment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants can necessitate additional, context-specific considerations.

In many schools, specific responsibilities and tasks are undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants. These may include:

- supporting teachers by bringing cultural aspects to teaching and learning
- teaching or supporting language, including teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and/or supporting language development among students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D)
- providing culturally responsive educational experiences for students to access curriculum
- facilitating engagement between students, home and the learning environment and building strong family connections
- connecting with students, providing pastoral care, supporting them to feel culturally safe and to achieve their goals, and being a role model
- running programs within the school to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- working outside the classroom, making connections between the school and the community.

In Australia, the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait teaching assistants is particularly important in remote communities where there is generally a high turnover of classroom teachers in schools. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants provide a stable presence for students in their learning environments (AITSL, 2021).

Given the vital role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants can have in bridging cultural knowledge and educational practices, it is crucial to implement the seven strategies in a way that recognises and utilises their unique cultural insights and supports their professional learning.

Implementation of the seven strategies should aim to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants, facilitate meaningful engagement with communities, and enhance educational outcomes for students through culturally-informed teaching and learning practices.

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators play a significant role in the communities in which they live and work due to their deep understanding of the local context, languages, histories, and cultures.'

AITSL, 2021

The seven strategies described above are relevant to the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants are deployed. Through research and consultation, additional considerations around clear role expectations and professional learning opportunities have been identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants.

Clear role expectations

As noted above, in many schools, there are specific responsibilities and tasks undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants. Ensuring there is a clear understanding within the school of the specific tasks and the workload they represent is important.

Also important is understanding what is *not* the responsibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants should not have sole responsibility for supporting the wellbeing and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, nor should they shoulder responsibility for cultural development of all staff across the school.

Professional learning opportunities

Professional learning opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants should consider the context in which they work, the duties they undertake and relevant industrial instruments.

Professional learning may be relevant in areas such as:

- advocacy skills, such as having difficult and challenging conversations
- empowerment, confidence-building and presentation skills
- leadership development
- stakeholder management
- writing for educational stakeholders
- supporting EAL/D students by understanding EAL/D teaching and learning strategies.

Consideration should be given to:

Role clarity and boundaries: providing clear guidelines to prevent overextension of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants into duties outside their scope, such as being the primary contact for all matters concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Regular role reviews: providing opportunities for regular discussions about and reviews of role expectations to accommodate changing student and school needs and personal development goals.

Recognition of cultural load: ensuring any additional work carried out by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants, due to their cultural expertise, is recognised and appropriately supported.

Fostering cultural knowledge: fostering an environment where the unique skills and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants are acknowledged, valued, respected and utilised in a balanced manner across the school, and understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants who are working off Country may be developing local cultural knowledge.

Employer and school leader role (where this differs): ensuring there is communication and a clear understanding about the relationships and expectations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching

assistant role, especially where the employer is not the school in which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistant works.

Supportive leadership: school leadership teams leading by example, having strong working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants, and showing all staff the highly-valued role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants play within the school.

Cultural, community and linguistic insights: valuing and integrating the unique cultural, community and linguistic insights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants bring to the school.

Cultural responsiveness training: school leaders should ensure all school staff are supported in developing cultural responsiveness in ways that do not impact on the workload or wellbeing of existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Professional growth: involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants in professional growth conversations, goal setting and identifying areas for further professional learning.



CASE STUDY

A remote independent Aboriginal community school – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants

With a strong focus on culturally responsive practices, a remote independent Aboriginal community school, situated in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia, employs Gija-speaking people to support student learning and facilitate strong community connections.

Gija educators operate as language and cultural translators between school staff, students and families. They are integral to the early years language program and overall curriculum of the school. The school has supported this by developing a duty statement to clarify expectations of all staff.

Furthermore, school leaders facilitate a process where teachers and Gija educators collaborate to develop long-term integrated learning plans. These plans are built on a seven-year cycle that uses dreaming stories as an integrating device across the curriculum. Gija educators work together to discuss the story and identify what they want the students to know and understand about this story. Once the plans have been developed, teachers and Gija educators work together in the classroom to implement them.

School sector: Independent

Location: Remote Western Australia

School type: Aboriginal community school, Kindergarten–Year 10

Enabling factors for the optimal deployment of teaching assistants

Effective implementation of the seven strategies relies on a supportive employer and school culture, characterised by inclusivity, collaboration, open communication and a commitment to professional learning for all staff.

Key factors that enable schools to strengthen the deployment of teaching assistants include:

- recognising teaching assistants as valued members of the school staff and having a clear understanding of their roles

- ensuring all staff understand the role and importance of teaching assistants
- recognising the importance of interpersonal relationships, supporting staff to establish, build and maintain strong relationships across the whole school and building teacher and teaching assistant partnerships
- encouraging open communication among staff to facilitate teamwork and information sharing
- a professional learning culture that supports the growth and learning of all staff within the school and provides effective training and development to teaching assistants
- effective collaboration, communication and relationships between the school, students, and families/carers where teaching assistants are deployed to support students.



CASE STUDY

A metropolitan independent specialised school – Enabling factors for the optimal deployment of teaching assistants

At an independent specialised school in metropolitan New South Wales, the leadership team has developed a supportive school culture where collaboration, teamwork and communication are central, and the role of all staff is understood and highly valued within the school. They employ a range of staff including teachers, teaching assistants and therapists to support the complex learning and support needs of their students.

Recognising the importance of every role, the school has established detailed guidance which addresses key focus areas of practice related to the responsibilities of teaching assistants and therapists, as well as professional expectations and skills that align with the culture of the school. These have enabled transparency around the expectations of the various roles at different career stages and provide a framework to support professional growth.

A growth culture is supported through the provision of consistent professional development processes. Any new teachers, teaching assistants and therapists undertake induction processes together and training is provided to all staff to ensure they understand the school's learning approaches. Teaching assistants are supported by teaching assistant mentors, which also provides leadership opportunities for teaching assistants.

The school builds cohesion amongst staff and collaboration is promoted through time being made available for teachers and teaching assistants to have 15 minutes each day for reviews to discuss student learning and lesson planning.

The benefits seen at the school are a committed team that value each other's roles, collaborate and work to put students at the centre, promoting student engagement and wellbeing.

School sector: Independent

Location: Metropolitan New South Wales

School type: Specialised, ages 3–18

Preparation, capability development and career progression for teaching assistants

The scope of teaching assistant roles in Australia is broad and shaped by local contexts. This includes industrial arrangements, differentiated tasks, and training and qualification levels, highlighting the need for flexible and comprehensive preparation and ongoing professional learning. Consideration of the specific role requirements and necessary capabilities for teaching assistant roles within their contexts is important.

Research emphasises that the preparation of teaching assistants for their role in the classroom is crucial for them to provide effective support. This preparation involves effective training and a clear career structure, as well as induction and ongoing professional learning opportunities (EEF, 2021 and Alborz et al., 2009).

Regular, close coordination with teachers is also crucial. This includes understanding daily tasks, lesson plans, and their specific roles in supporting teachers and students. Structured preparation enables teaching assistants focus their efforts and support the educational process effectively.

Pre-employment preparation

In Australia, the preparation or requirements of employment for teaching assistant roles encompass a variety of skills and capabilities, as well as formal training and qualification options. Although there is no standardised entry qualification requirement for teaching assistants across all roles, some jurisdictions or roles do have specific prerequisites.

Formal qualifications

Qualifications for teaching assistants often include vocational education and training (VET), such as a Certificate III or IV in Education Support, which is highly regarded in many jurisdictions. These qualifications typically cover key areas like supporting child development, understanding educational environments, and managing classroom challenges. First aid certification is another common requirement, ensuring that teaching assistants are prepared to respond to health-related incidents in the classroom.

While there is no common requirement across jurisdictions, research has shown that in Australia, approximately half of the teaching assistants in specialist education settings possess a VET Certificate or Diploma in Education Support, yet much of the training remains on-the-job and experiential (Strnadová et al., 2022).

Though entry into the role does not always require a formal qualification, teaching assistants can develop their capabilities by engaging in professional learning and further education, including by obtaining relevant formal qualifications while already employed as a teaching assistant.

Skills and capabilities

Some teaching assistant roles may require specific capabilities. For example, a teaching assistant who is working with a teacher to deliver an evidence-based literacy intervention to an individual student or a small group will be most effective when they have adequate written and oral literacy levels in addition to any relevant qualifications. As well as literacy skills, some roles also require specific skills in supporting students with additional needs, numeracy development, or technology use in education.

Consideration should also be given to matching the needs of the role with candidates' qualifications and capabilities, including Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language proficiency where relevant, to ensure teaching assistants are well suited for the role they are deployed in and can effectively support students in the classroom to enhance learning outcomes.

Teaching assistants have identified the importance of training to meet student needs and day-to-day preparedness. In consultation with AITSL, and in published research (Cockcroft & Atkinson, 2015), teaching assistants also articulated a strong need for this training in their role.

Professional growth and career progression

Teaching assistants within Australian schools should be provided with opportunities for career progression, professional growth, and capability development through both formal and informal professional learning. Many Australian education systems provide both mandatory and optional learning and development opportunities for teaching assistants.

Performance, development and professional learning

Performance and development (P&D) processes should apply to all staff, including teaching assistants, and can provide a valuable opportunity for them to work together with teachers and school leaders in identifying relevant learning opportunities to support their professional growth.

These opportunities may include school-based professional learning sessions, training programs which are delivered externally, or opportunities to enhance teaching assistants' skills and capabilities through on-the-job experience. Where possible, professional learning should be conducted during regular working hours to ensure accessibility and alignment with teaching assistants' roles and development goals.

A range of institutions and professional associations offer courses aimed at enhancing the skills of teaching assistants, covering areas such as literacy, numeracy, additional needs and disability, and inclusive education. These courses are designed to support teaching assistants in developing specialised skills that are directly applicable to their roles in supporting student learning.

As outlined previously, teaching assistants who are already working in a school may also consider obtaining formal qualifications like the Certificate IV or Diploma of Education Support, which can enhance their knowledge and skills and prepare them for advanced roles.

Career pathways

While being a teaching assistant is a valuable career in itself, education employers across Australia support a range of career pathways for teaching assistants, including recognised pathways for teaching assistants to enter the teaching profession. Teaching assistants can also leverage their experience and further education to move into specialised support roles, where they work closely with students requiring additional assistance.

The journey towards becoming a teacher, for those who choose this path, includes completing a formal ITE program, with many providers delivering pathways for teaching assistants which offer credit through recognition of prior learning and experience, reducing the time it takes to complete these programs. These pathways not only enrich the teaching profession with experienced educators, but also offer teaching assistants a rewarding career trajectory that builds on their foundational skills in education support.

In some jurisdictions or pathway programs, teaching assistants can study an ITE program while continuing to work in the classroom using Alternative Authorisation to Teach provisions offered by teacher regulatory authorities. These arrangements are particularly valuable for teaching assistants who live and work in regional and remote areas, who can be supported to retrain as teachers while remaining employed and living in their community.

In summary, the preparation of teaching assistants in Australia, which includes a combination of preferred formal qualifications and essential on-the-job experience, along with engagement in continuous professional learning, is important in effectively addressing the varied needs and requirements within the dynamic context of educational settings.



CASE STUDY

Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People – Capability development and career progression for teaching assistants

In the Tasmanian Government school system, the commitment to the development and career progression of teaching assistants (referred to as Teacher Assistants in Tasmania) is demonstrated through the Teacher Assistant Development Program offered by the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP). This program provides qualification pathways, including a Certificate III in School-Based Education Support through TasTAFE and a Diploma in Education Support through the University of Tasmania. This initiative aligns with the strategic goal of enhancing and advancing the skills of Teacher Assistants.

Each year, DECYP allocates funds for Teacher Assistants to enrol in these programs, covering course fees and providing release time during work hours for study-related activities. This investment is part of a broader strategy to ensure a consistent supply of skilled Teacher Assistants prepared to step into Education Support Specialist roles, highlighting a clear pathway for career advancement within the Tasmanian education sector.

The Education Support Specialist role represents a significant career progression for Teacher Assistants within the Tasmanian government education sector. This position is part of the Teaching Service (Tasmanian Public Sector) Award, recognising the advanced skill set and professional development attained through dedicated educational pathways.

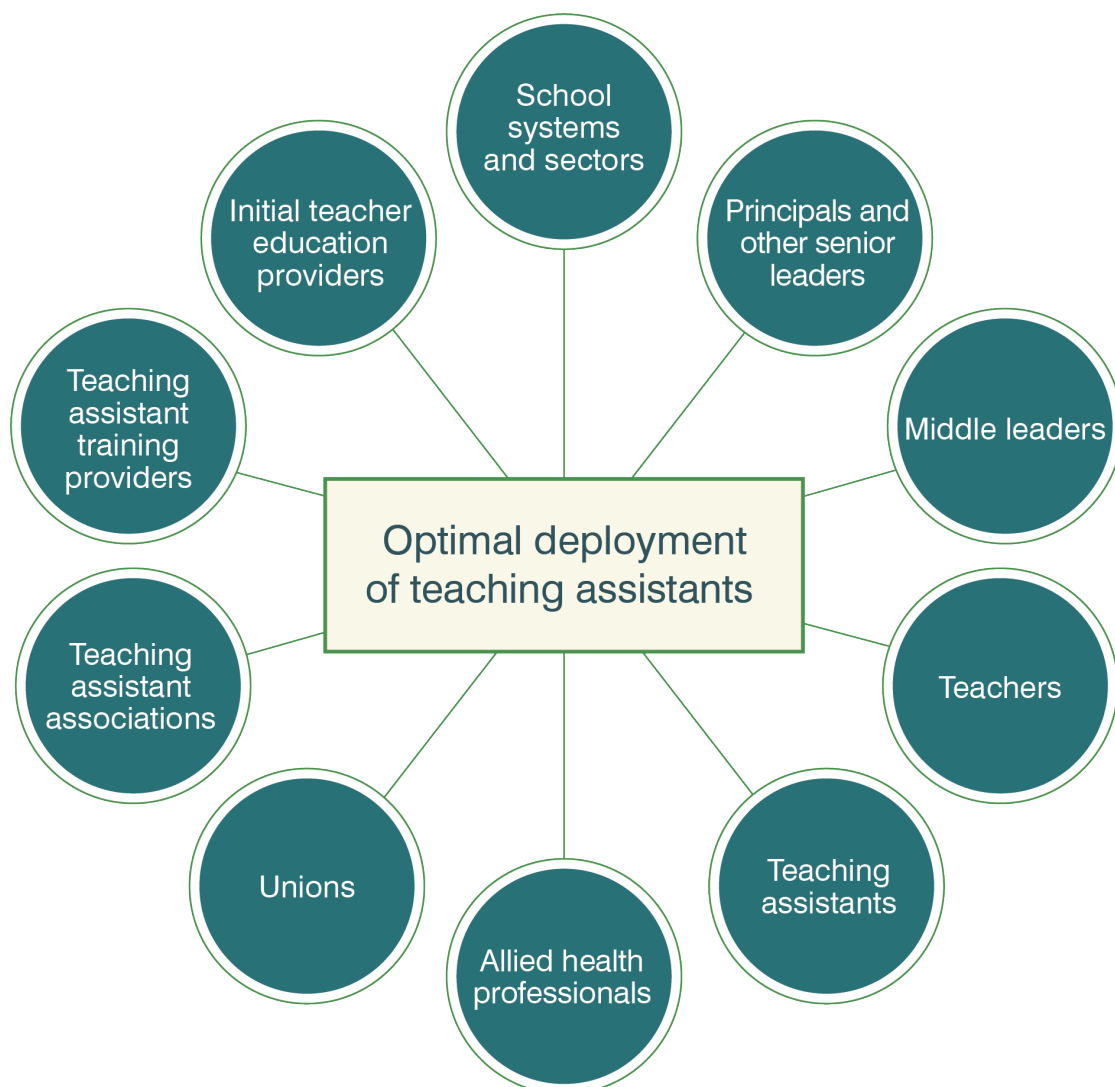
School sector: Government

Location: Tasmania

Who plays a role in the optimal deployment of teaching assistants?

Supporting the optimal deployment of teaching assistants is a shared responsibility across the education system, with many stakeholders playing a role. For some, this is a direct role in the deployment of teaching assistants such as principals, school leaders and teachers. For others, this role is around policy development and support such as that provided by systems and sectors.

The following groups have a role in supporting the effective deployment of teaching assistants:



Education systems and sectors

Education systems and sectors have an important role to play in supporting schools to make the best use of teaching assistants' time. They work at the policy level to:

- support and value teaching assistants as an integral part of the school staffing profile, contributing to optimal school operations and student learning, achievement and wellbeing
- establish clear role descriptions, qualification requirements, and career progression pathways to acknowledge the evolving roles of teaching assistants within the educational system
- facilitate development and provision of professional learning to enhance the knowledge and skills of teaching assistants, enabling them to better support student and teacher needs.
- develop, monitor and review policies related to teaching assistants to ensure that current policies align with evidence-based research in optimal deployment – for example, by considering student supervision responsibilities to support student and teacher needs.

Principals and other senior leaders

Principals, either directly or through delegation to other senior leaders, play a pivotal role in ensuring understanding and application of evidence-based approaches to optimally deploy teaching assistants within their schools. The school leadership team has a role in ensuring that all students have as much time as possible with the teacher, especially those students with the greatest need for support (Evidence for Learning, 2019).

Principals and other senior leaders provide strategic leadership and play an important role in establishing and strengthening school culture, ensuring the contributions made by all staff are valued. They enable collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, facilitate professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants, acknowledge their unique contributions, and encourage use of evidence-based practices. They embed desired practices in an overall school strategy for deploying teaching assistants, and facilitate the review, monitoring, and evaluation of the ways in which teaching assistants are deployed and initiate change processes when needed.

School leadership ensures effective communication, clear role expectations, and effective deployment, maximising the positive impact of teaching assistants on student learning and the use of teaching assistants to reduce teacher workload.

'Research suggests that rethinking the role of teaching assistants is much more likely to be successful if senior leaders coordinate action, given their responsibility for managing change at school level and making decisions on staff employment and deployment.'

EEF, 2018 p. 4

Middle leaders

Middle leaders are often the connection between principals and senior leaders, and the work of teachers and teaching assistants in the classroom. They can provide support directly to teachers and teaching assistants in planning, evaluation and feedback processes and facilitate effective communication and collaboration.

Middle leaders can provide valuable insights into evidence-based, high-impact classroom practices, and support effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants to contribute meaningfully to student progress and teacher workload reduction

Some middle leaders, such as welfare, inclusion or wellbeing coordinators may hold a distinct role in the strategic deployment of teaching assistants, particularly where this includes supporting students with disability or additional needs. For these coordinators, their closeness to the classroom enables them to ensure that teaching assistants are utilised to provide effective support. The middle leader has a crucial role in making sure that teaching assistants, and those who work with them, understand the tasks that are appropriate (and not appropriate) for the teaching assistant to undertake both inside and outside of the classroom.

In some contexts, middle leaders are managers of teaching assistants and support their professional learning. Middle leader expertise in welfare and inclusion is crucial for developing and implementing targeted training and professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants, within regular working hours, enhancing their skills in supporting diverse learning environments. Additionally, these coordinators advocate for continuous professional learning, ensuring teaching assistants are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and practices to support students' wellbeing and academic success.

By fostering a positive and inclusive team environment, middle leaders can contribute to the overall success of teaching assistant deployment.

'Research suggests it is the decisions made by school leaders and teachers, not the decisions of teaching assistants, that best explain the effects of teaching assistants support in the classroom on student progress.'

EEF, 2018 p. 8

Teachers

Teachers play a central role in the optimal deployment of teaching assistants. The day-to-day responsibility for making effective use of teaching assistants' time is based on how teachers leverage the skills of teaching assistants within their classroom.

Teachers actively engage in collaboration, and work alongside teaching assistants, ensuring a cohesive educational approach. Relationship building is a key aspect, where teachers establish effective working dynamics with teaching assistants, fostering a supportive and communicative environment.

Teaching assistants

Teaching assistants themselves have an important role to play, forming a vital part of a school's staff as valuable team members. Teaching assistants play a role in building effective working relationships and in collaboratively working with teachers. They also contribute to creating a supportive and cohesive education environment that benefits students, teachers and the school.

While ultimately the deployment of teaching assistants' time is directed by school leaders and teachers, it relies on their active involvement in preparation with teachers, responsive interactions with students and the school community, professional learning and inclusion in any change processes occurring within the school.

Allied health professionals

Allied health professionals, such as psychologists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists offer useful insights into individual student requirements. They provide valuable information to

teachers and teaching assistants in effective support strategies and contribute to detailed individual student learning and development plans for implementation by teachers and teaching assistants. Any recommendations or information shared about individual students should be subject to informed consent and appropriate confidentiality protocols, as allied health staff are bound by legal and ethical obligations.

Additionally, their involvement forms part of a holistic approach to student wellbeing, fostering a collaborative environment within the educational team. By working in tandem with teachers and teaching assistants, allied health professionals enhance the overall effectiveness of support systems, contributing to an inclusive and nurturing learning environment in schools.

Unions

Unions represent the industrial interests of school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, as well as providing professional support to their members and advocacy for the profession. Unions provide current information about working conditions including awards and industrial agreements. Additionally, they may provide professional learning initiatives, helping teaching assistants stay current with effective practices and educational advancements.

Teaching assistant associations

Associations for teaching assistants provide professional learning, networking, advocacy and offer platforms for teaching assistants to access resources, share evidence-based practices and stay informed about the latest trends in education.

Professional associations also contribute to the recognition and validation of the vital role teaching assistants play in the education system. They advocate for policies that promote professional growth, and the acknowledgement of teaching assistants' contributions to student success. They support continuous learning, collaboration, and the advancement of teaching assistants, ensuring they are well equipped to make meaningful contributions to the Australian education landscape.

Initial teacher education providers

Understanding the evolving roles of teaching assistants is an important aspect of initial teacher education. Initial teacher education (ITE) providers and programs can play a role in supporting pre-service teachers to understand the role, responsibilities, and potential impact of teaching assistants within the education system. By developing understanding of teaching assistants' roles and potential impact as part of their ITE program, beginning teachers may be more likely to appreciate how teaching assistants can complement their own efforts in enhancing student learning outcomes.

Additionally, engaging with teaching assistants during professional experience placements offers pre-service teachers further insights into the role of a teaching assistant and how best to leverage their support in the classroom. Such experience may offer a deeper understanding of teaching assistants' roles, encourage a collaborative mindset and ensure beginning teachers, once they have graduated, can work with teaching assistants effectively.

By focusing on collaboration skills and professional experience and encouraging a deep understanding of the roles of teaching assistants, ITE providers can help prepare pre-service teachers to create supportive and effective learning environments. This approach could benefit student learning outcomes and foster an inclusive and cooperative educational community.

Teaching assistant training providers

Teaching assistant training providers play a role in the educational ecosystem by offering courses and qualifications designed to prepare individuals for their roles as teaching assistants. These courses equip prospective teaching assistants with a solid foundation in educational support. Through interactive workshops, theoretical learning, and practical placements, candidates gain first-hand experience and insights into the classroom environment, ensuring they are well prepared for their responsibilities.

In addition to initial training, ongoing professional learning is vital for the continuous development of teaching assistants. Training can be offered in specialised areas, such as supporting students with additional needs, implementing inclusive education strategies, and leveraging digital tools for learning. By engaging in regular professional learning, teaching assistants can further enhance their ability to support teachers and contribute positively to student outcomes.

Related resources

This section is designed to complement the guidance provided in this document, offering a broader spectrum of tools and references that support the effective implementation of strategies and practices. These resources aim to enhance understanding, provide additional context, and support the continuous professional learning of all school staff.

Spotlight: [The impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, AITSL](#)

[Advice for beginning teachers working in remote settings, AITSL](#)

Spotlight: [Inclusive education: teaching students with disability, AITSL](#)

[Supporting students with disability – Implementation resources for teachers and leaders, AITSL](#)

[Tiered interventions](#), Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)

[Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#), Evidence for Learning (E4L)

[A School's Guide to Implementation](#), Education Endowment Foundation UK (EEF)

Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching assistants: Teaching assistants from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background who work with classroom teachers, community members and school visitors to provide culturally responsive educational experiences that enable students to engage with and access curriculum, participate in learning and achieve positive learning outcomes. They contribute to providing culturally responsive educational experiences, along with teachers and teaching assistants from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Evidence-based interventions: Instructional strategies or programs that are grounded in rigorous scientific research, demonstrating effectiveness in enhancing student outcomes. This approach involves the application of methods that have been empirically validated through controlled studies, ensuring that educational practices are not only theoretically sound but also proven to yield positive results in learning. These interventions are tailored to address specific educational goals, such as improving literacy and numeracy skills, and are implemented with fidelity to the research that supports their efficacy, ensuring that students receive the most effective support for their learning needs.

Inclusive education: Inclusive education means that all students are welcomed by their school in age-appropriate settings and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school. Inclusive education is about how schools are developed and designed, including classrooms, programmes and activities so that all students learn and participate together (DET 2015, p 2).

Initial teacher education (ITE) programs: Entry level teaching qualifications completed at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. ITE programs in Australia are accredited by the relevant teacher regulatory authority to ensure they meet the requirements set out in AITSL's *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*.

Initial teacher education provider: A higher education provider offering one or more accredited initial teacher education programs.

Specialised school settings: The *Australian Education Act 2013* defines two forms of specialised schools:

- A special assistance school is one that primarily caters to students with social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties.
- A special school is a school that provides education under special programs, or special activities, designed specifically for students with disabilities.

Teaching assistants: School staff dedicated to working closely with teachers and students, generally at the classroom level. They support teachers with routine school duties, classroom activities, and the care and management of students, including those with specific needs. Teaching assistants are known by a variety of titles in schools and educational systems and sectors across Australia.

Pre-service teacher: A student enrolled in an accredited ITE program.

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Legislation

Australian Education Act 2013 (Commonwealth)

