Chapter 9: Maximising the work of teaching assistants: Building an inclusive community of research-led practice

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Introduction

We begin this chapter with a key question: How can we plan for high quality inclusive teaching and learning if we do not consider the roles of all of those involved? Teaching Assistants (TAs) play an integral part in the school lives of many children. They contribute to inclusive practice as both a classroom resource and through running intervention programmes. And yet, despite the rise in numbers of TAs working in schools, their roles and responsibilities are sometimes not well defined, and opportunities for developing research-led practice to develop inclusive practice can be limited. This chapter will argue that TAs should be fully integrated into research-led and reflective practice processes, to develop shared beliefs and understandings that will benefit all children.

This chapter provides an insight into how **all** staff in a primary school in the East of England have engaged with research about inclusive classroom practice to improve the outcomes for all children, but especially those who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). As a 'living case' it explores the principles and recommendations upon which opportunities for children to be included and feel included were created. We begin by examining some of the key research before moving on to exemplify the research-led practices that define the school's approach. These practices are underpinned by the following principles:

1. Consistently promoting a sense of belonging and achievement for all children.

2. Recognising the essential role of TAs in supporting high quality teaching.

3. The use of shared professional development.

We demonstrate how all staff can and should be involved in a research informed approach to educating all children and share approaches and strategies that may influence thinking in other educational settings. We have witnessed the powerful effects of nurturing and encouraging children in a holistic way on their educational journey when such a collective endeavour takes place.

The role of Teaching Assistants in education

In England, the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) is clear that the responsibility for children identified with SEND lies with the teacher:

> ‘Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, ***including*** where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.’ (6.36)
>
> ‘Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.’ (1.24)

Unfortunately, research suggests that in mainstream classrooms children identified with SEND, particularly those with greater or more complex needs, continue to be separated from their peers and their teachers (Webster, 2015; Blatchford and Webster, 2018). A key reason for this has been the use of TAs.

Over several decades, the number of TAs in schools has risen significantly. Over the last 20 years, the number in mainstream schools in England has more than trebled, and this rise is reflected in education systems across the world (Webster et al., 2021). TAs have moved into highly skilled roles, supporting the most vulnerable children. There is growing evidence that TA-led structured interventions lead to children making progress (see Webster et al., 2021 for a summary). However, research into TA support inside the classroom has challenged the commonsense notion that support from additional adults should impact positively on outcomes. The large-scale Deployment and Impact of Support Staff project (Blatchford, Russell, and Webster, 2012) found a *negative* relationship between the amount of TA support children received and their academic progress in English, mathematics and science. This was most marked for children with the most complex needs. The qualitative elements of the project established the Wider Pedagogical Role model to explain the reasons for these results. Three key aspects of this model are:

1. **Deployment** - TA support was being used as a default for children identified with SEND. This led to a separation effect, where children were being taught away from both the teacher and their peers.
2. **Preparedness** - Many TAs reported working with very little direction. Teacher/TA liaison time was rarely available, and teachers had not had training in how to manage the work of additional adults.
3. **Practice** - In addition (and partly because of these issues) studies of the interactions between TAs and children showed that children were often over supported. For example, they were given answers or too much help in completing parts of the task they could potentially carry out independently. TA/child interactions also tended to use more closed questions and close down learning conversations where new learning could potentially take place.

The research shone a spotlight on the inequalities and the realities that children identified as having SEND were experiencing in schools across England and Wales. The period following publication saw many headlines criticising the ‘Mum’s Army’ of teaching assistants and the lack of academic progress of the children they were supporting. However, Webster et al (2016) suggest that instead of vilifying TAs, their role and identity should be reframed. A key question

asked in this book and throughout the Unlocking Research series is 'What is an inclusive education?' To consider inclusive education, one must think not only about the children and our vision for them, but also about the agency of the adults who support children daily. One only needs do a quick internet search to understand that the world of education is geared towards teachers. What if an educator became the Education Secretary? Would they look beyond the traditional teacher/class model? They may instead consider schools and their communities as settings where valuable TAs feature and perform a vital role; that 'TAs are the mortar in the brickwork; they hold schools together in numerous and sometimes unnoticed ways' (Webster et al., 2021, p. 2). Key questions therefore become 'What role should TAs have in developing inclusive education?' and 'How can teachers and TAs work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children?'

The books *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants in Primary Schools* (Webster et al., 2021) and *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants* (Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016) and the Education Endowment Foundation guidance report *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants* (Sharples, Webster and Blatchford, 2018) set out research based best practice principles in relation to TAs in everyday classrooms. Arising from these works are four key recommendations. These are:

Key recommendations

- TAs should not be used as informal teaching resources for low attaining pupils
- Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
- Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
- Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom

(Sharples et al., 2018, p. 10)

The graduated approach and the Teaching Assistant role

The Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) sets out a graduated approach for provision for schools in England. This uses continuous Assess, Plan, Do and Review cycles to remove barriers to children's learning and review the provision put in place for children identified with SEND. The responsibility for this lies with the teacher, in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. The graduated approach draws increasingly on research evidenced interventions and specialist input if the strategies put in place fail to meet the needs of the child. TAs can play an important role in delivering interventions and implementing individual programmes and strategies provided by specialists (under the direction and oversight of the teacher). However, the Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) makes clear that teachers have a statutory duty to provide high quality teaching for all children, before considering an intervention or the deployment of a TA to support an individual:

> ‘High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching’ (6.37)

There are clear links here to the Education Endowment Foundation recommendations that ‘TAs should not be used as informal teaching resources for low attaining pupils’ (Sharples et al., 2018, p.10) and ‘Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them’ (*ibid*). Whereas there is clear evidence that TA led interventions can and do have an impact on learning, the same is not the case for classroom-based TA support (Webster et al., 2021; Blatchford, Russell, and Webster, 2012). However, many TAs spend much of their time providing classroom support. We argue that TAs should be using this time to support children to access the teacher’s input and help. Teachers need to plan for and manage this support effectively. This helps children to access high quality teaching, and therefore supports the full inclusion of all children in all classroom activities. We focus for the remainder of this section on the role of the TA in supporting the provision of high quality teaching.

What is high quality teaching?

Although the term is frequently used in discussions of inclusive practice, there is little in the way of an agreed definition. We would argue that one of the key things that individual teachers and TAs (and school leaders) can do is to develop a definition of high quality teaching that is shared and understood by all staff working around a child. Decisions can then be made about how teachers, TAs and other staff may make their unique contribution to this high quality teaching provision. One starting point is Coe et al. (2014) who, based on extensive research, set out six components of ‘great teaching’ (or ‘effective pedagogy’).

Components of effective pedagogy

1) Pedagogical (content) knowledge – the teacher has a strong understanding of the material and can recognise and address misconceptions.

2) Quality of instruction – including effective questioning, modelling, and scaffolding.

3) Classroom climate – including quality interactions and high expectations.

4) Classroom management – including good use of time, space and resources and effective and consistent management of behaviour.

5) Teacher beliefs – including theories about learning and the role of the teacher in this.

6) Professional behaviours - including engaging with professional development and reflection on practice.

Coe et al. (2014)

The reader will notice that these components apply to teaching all children, not just those identified with SEND: high quality teaching requires teachers to consider all these aspects in relation to inclusive education. For example, a teacher may need to extend their subject knowledge to include how different barriers to learning may affect understanding and this then requires them to make modifications to their pedagogy in response to individual needs. Values and attitudes to inclusion need to be examined and challenged in relation to components 3, 4, 5 and 6. This is every teacher's responsibility. Consideration can then be made by the teacher as to how to utilise any within class TA support available.

These points raise another important question 'To what extent are these components applicable to TAs?'. We would argue that all of these six areas are relevant to TAs, but that they need to be considered in relation to their role descriptors and responsibilities (i.e. they will not be the same as for teachers). A set of (non-mandatory and non-statutory) *Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants* was published by UNISON et al. in 2016 and provides a useful starting point for considering ways to professionalise the TA role and develop TAs in the components above. Much can be developed and shared across the teacher/TA workforce by building opportunities for joint professional development. Developing shared beliefs and professional behaviours around inclusion and utilising consistent approaches for components 2 to 4 would seem essential, as would supporting TAs' subject knowledge development. Together with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, this suggests a positive way forward for schools that want to build effective teacher/TA partnerships in relation to inclusion. The Education Endowment Foundation recommendation 'Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom' (Sharples et al., 2018, p.10) should include both professional development and opportunities for teachers and TAs to liaise about children's needs and progress.

Although research into the graduated approach is limited, a useful study by Greenward and Kelly (2017) of the similar approach *Response to Intervention* in the United States highlights conditions that can support or inhibit effective implementation of the strategy. These are:

- Partnership and collaboration;
- Continued professional development;
- Clarification of roles;
- Leadership, and a shared commitment.

We would argue that school leaders, and individual teachers and TAs should be actively involved in reviewing and planning for development in each of the areas raised by Greenward and Kelly (2017). A key consideration should be whether TAs are fully integrated into these four areas.

A focus on developing independence

Of course, there will be children who need additional support to access the high quality teaching provided by the teacher, and the teacher will need to make decisions as to how to allocate both

themselves and any TA support to these children. However, one thing to be aware of is the danger of children developing 'learned helplessness' through having adult support constantly available to them. Research has shown that TA/child interactions are characterised by over supporting and providing answers (for a summary see Bosanquet, Radford and Webster, 2021). This leads us to the Education Endowment Foundation recommendation to 'Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning' (Sharples et al., 2018, p.10). Of course, this raises the question 'What does independence mean?'

Our starting point for this would be to consider positively what the child can already do in relation to any task. Although children may need different levels of support (from an occasional drop-in by an adult, to 1-1 support), the key is to predict exactly which aspects of the task will *need* to be supported, and for a TA not to become involved in any aspects which the child could do independently. Otherwise, there is the risk of over-supporting them. At the same time, a TA needs to be pro-actively teaching the child strategies, including the use of resources, that will help them the next time they need to perform a similar task. So, they are not only supporting them right now but preparing them to tackle future tasks more independently.

Therefore, the key to developing greater independence is that where TAs play a pedagogical role, this should be one that is focused on scaffolding as an approach (Radford et al., 2015; Radford et al., 2014). A term first coined by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) scaffolding describes the way that an adult (or more experienced peer) provides structured support towards a learning goal. At the beginning of a new task an adult will offer a higher level of support for the aspects that a child finds challenging, but they allow the child to carry out the parts that they can do and are constantly seeking ways to support them to take on responsibility for the more challenging aspects.

Drawing on scaffolding theory and linguistics, Bosanquet et al. (2021) have developed a scaffolding framework as a practical support for TAs in structuring their interactions with children in a way that maximises independence, and therefore inclusion. This forms part of an overarching set of principles and strategies for framing a pedagogical role for TAs, called *Maximising the Practice of Teaching Assistants*. The scaffolding framework has 5 levels of interaction. When a child experiences difficulty an adult should work downwards from the top of the framework, only moving to the next level if necessary.

Scaffolding for independence framework

Self-scaffolding – the child uses the resources available and the strategies that they have previously been taught to support themselves in solving any problems that arise. The TA's role is to observe and monitor, and to decide when to intervene.

Prompting – If a child is not self-scaffolding, the TA provides a prompt. This is best described as encouragement. Often, simply providing time and space to think is a helpful way of prompting.

However, a prompt can be verbal (e.g. 'What do you think you could do?') or a gesture (e.g. pointing towards a helpful resource).

Clueing – If the child has had one or more prompts but is clearly struggling, then the TA would provide a clue. A clue is a small piece of information that will help but doesn't give away the answer.

Modelling – If the above steps have not supported the child to move forward then the TA will need to model the step that they are stuck on. The expectation is that the child repeats the model straight afterwards.

Correcting – This is included in the framework for completeness, but TAs are encouraged not to correct in learning interactions unless as part of a teacher agreed strategy. This is because modelling already corrects, but the child is expected to repeat the model. This allows them to demonstrate understanding of the learning point in a way that simply correcting does not.

(Bosanquet et al., 2021)

For further explanation of the scaffolding framework and helpful examples and activities, see T*he Teaching Assistant's guide to effective interaction: How to Maximise your practice* (Bosanquet et al., 2021).

Exemplifying research informed practice: grass roots development

In this section, we discuss how one setting has utilised the guiding principles set out in this chapter, together with a wider focus on research-led development for all staff to support the inclusion of all children. This reframing took place at a primary school in the East of England during the summer of 2016, at the end of the school's first academic year. We explain how the case study school took a principled approach and implemented the recommendations from the literature discussed earlier in this chapter.

Aimee's story

I was employed as a TA during a time of rapid growth at the school and during the creation of the curriculum design and ways of working practices. In 2016, I attended Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants training, where I first met my co-author, Paula. At last I was provided with the knowledge and understanding to support vulnerable children that I had been employed to assist. This gift came via the sharing of a newly published book, *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to Effective Interaction: How to Maximise Your Practice* (now in second edition, Bosanquet et al., 2021). The book contained all the necessary answers to questions that had occupied my thoughts since I was first employed as a teaching assistant, over the 10 years prior to its publication. Questions such as: 'How can I promote independence?', 'How do I scaffold learning?' and 'How can I provide the correct level of questioning during learning activities?' Immediately, I set about devouring the pages that threw light on the shadow I had felt existed. I was now empowered to contribute towards the construction of the bridge (Veck, 2014) linking the supported child to their peers, teacher, and curriculum.

Fortunately, I was now part of a newly formed team of educators where educational research and theory was to be shared with all the team not just teachers. I was soon to become familiar with the works of many philosophers, psychologists, and educationalists. At last, I found a new language: there was an alternative way to educate children which didn't involve ability grouping and/or the segregation of individuals. These theories and ideas became the food that nourished the inclusive community and helped inform the inclusive practice within the school. However, just as the phrase '*one swallow does not a summer make'* suggests, one head teacher and an enthusiastic teaching assistant, both passionate about inclusion, cannot create an inclusive community alone. The school required likeminded educators to promote social justice and the principles of democratic education, and celebrate diverse diversities (Biddulph, 2017) within the school community and to influence the educational discourse for all children everywhere via continued professional development sessions, social media and publications.

The Education Endowment Foundation's *Making best use of Teaching Assistants* Guidance Report (Sharples et al., 2018) provided the first necessary concise information that could provide our whole team with an insight into the research discussed in the first half of this chapter. Instead of overwhelming the team with numerous research papers, the decision was made to share the summary poster of the recommendations. It was found that sharing the poster and devising an action plan helped to develop inclusive practice across school. The small steps outlined within the action plan helped the development of practice become manageable and achievable

This is how we, as a team, implemented the recommendations and research within the school.

Recommendation 1: TAs should not be used as informal teaching resources for low attaining pupils

The leadership team took a bold move away from the traditional 1-1 TA role when possible (although there are some children who require an adult to supervise them all the time because of safety issues). Initially, this approach was met with some resistance from members of our team. We found that experienced TAs who had been so used to sitting or standing next to their designated charge, found it difficult to step back and observe what the child could do unaided. So familiar were they with passing the child their pencil; opening their book for them; and providing the listening within each lesson and then parroting exactly what the teacher had said back to the child, it was difficult for them to change their practice. Some of our TAs experienced a sense of redundancy. It became obvious how dependent both child and adult were on the existing model, which was comfortable and familiar, constantly relying on one another to complete the required learning tasks.

However, the supporting adults in the classroom soon began to realise that when they stood back, they were able to observe the needs of all the children in the classroom. Throughout the school day, most children have a moment of struggle. Therefore, TAs need to be able to learn to read the classroom and step in to help during that moment of challenge, or to provide the necessary questions to help a child understand the task at hand. Our team of supporting adults

identified that their role is more dynamic and when they are deployed differently, it frees the teacher up to work with all children, individual groups, or a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

As a result, in 2018 we resigned the title of Teaching Assistant to the archives and chose to call our adults in supporting roles Learning Coaches. This highlighted that our adults had a pedagogical role, educating children alongside the teachers. Our Learning Coaches were on a journey to becoming formal professional teaching resources with the ability and necessary skills to coach the best out of the children they worked with each day. This involved a vast array of continuing professional development, coaching, and building reflective practices.

Thinking about recommendation 1:

- Take a moment to consider your classroom and how other adults work within it.
- Does everyone currently work with all children?
- What would you need to do to meet the requirements of this recommendation?

Recommendation 2: Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them

To meet fully the requirements of this recommendation, it was made clear at interview to newly employed Learning Coaches what would be required of them in their role. This would likely be different to what they had experienced in previous school settings. Learning Coaches were encouraged during the first term to build relationships with the children they would support and then strive to promote a sense of belonging and facilitate inclusive practices.

This involved small interventions which enabled, for example, a supported child to enter the playground at exactly the same time as their peers. Learning Coaches knew when to blend into the background, so peers instigated conversation with the child instead of the adult. They would ensure that a child identified with significant SEND was taught the names of his or her peers. These seem obvious examples, but sadly these do not always happen.

Learning Coaches are encouraged to ensure that children stay in class as much as possible with their class teacher and can access the lessons whenever possible. This involves teamwork and a deep understanding of the child. In some cases, it may be that the child experiences only a small part of the lesson alongside their peers, but they are visible to all members of their class community. Their contribution is valued. We promote inclusion via our classroom family boards, which shine a light on the children's lived lives/experiences??? outside of school. Highlighting those diverse diversities mentioned earlier, the children are a visible part of the school community in every sense, along with their siblings, and parents/carers: not only for all the adults but also the children in their class.

In school, we have implemented a dynamic relationship of class teacher and TA working together to complement teaching and learning (Webster, 2019). This model changes the traditional picture that one has of a classroom, with the teacher at the front and the TA sat next to the child who has greater or more complex special educational needs. The Learning Coach could be supporting the whole class's independent learning from the front of the class, whilst the class teacher works with a child who would have typically/traditionally??? been supported with a 1-1 TA. Or the class may be split into smaller groups with the class teacher working with a teacher focus group whilst the learning coach works with others.

Additionally, we have ensured that all our children identified as having additional needs have a network of several adults who are able to support them without any disruption to their education. This means there is no lost learning experienced if a particular adult is not available. Children cannot afford time for new relationships to be built; they require a continuum of uninterrupted learning. This is possible because of the dynamic adult relationships in school where information is shared with all. This constant whole team dialogue provides the necessary jig-saw pieces of understanding so that all adults have a shared knowledge of need.

Thinking about recommendation 2:

Teacher: When was the last time you worked on a one-to-one basis with a child who has an Education, Health and Care Plan?

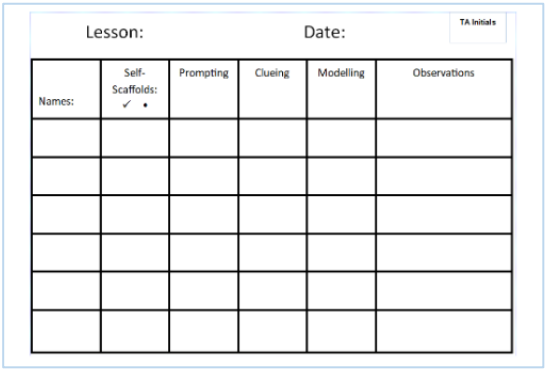
Teaching Assistant: When was the last time you supported the whole class whilst the class teacher worked with a child with additional needs?

Recommendation 3: TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning

Building on our learning from the *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants* professional development, we have scheduled an annual Learning Coach continuing professional development cycle which includes input on scaffolding, and coaching sessions via an educational coach. This has enabled our team to always attempt to provide the least help first.

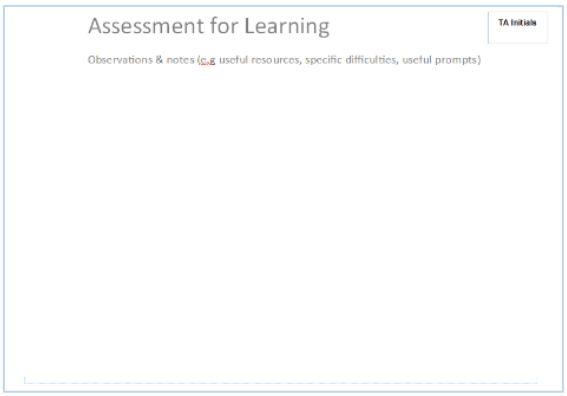
Following a scaffolding professional development session, we created assessment for learning stickers to provide our teachers with a snapshot of the support level the children have needed during each lesson. This informs the teacher's planning and helps them decide whether particular children will need to be part of a teacher focus group or require more deliberate practice. Learning Coaches are fortunate to receive professional development at the school which ensures that the team are well prepared for the pedagogical challenges of a primary classroom and the many individuals within it.

Examples of the assessment for learning stickers used by the learning coach team are provided (Figures 1 and 2). These are stuck in the Class Teacher's Responsive Teaching Journal at the end of each lesson.


Lesson: Date: TA Initials

Names:	Self-Scaffolds: ✓ •	Prompting	Clueing	Modelling	Observations

Figure 1: Assessment for Learning sticker part 1


Assessment for Learning TA Initials

Observations & notes (e.g useful resources, specific difficulties, useful prompts)

Figure 2: Assessment for Learning sticker part 2

During 2015/16 we tried to ensure that all teachers met the adults who worked in their classrooms once a week at lunchtime. However, with sharply rising pupil numbers this was no longer possible. Consequently, we then contracted hours for our Learning Coaches to attend weekly planning meetings with their key stage. Other important information is shared with them as a group on a Friday during a Learning Coach gathering. Friday gatherings are a space for the team to celebrate individual child successes and a time to discuss difficulties. Through discussion we have often come to the conclusion that an adults could reflect on how they could implement or consider an element of provision in order for the child to succeed. Then we adapt our practice to ensure a child has everything they require to be included.

Thinking about recommendation 3:

Teacher: How do the TAs you work with provide observational information which informs your teaching and planning?

Teaching Assistant: How much support are you providing the children that you work with? Is it always the least amount first?

Recommendation 4: Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom

Effective high quality teaching relies on staff beliefs (including theories about teaching and learning) and professional behaviours (including participation in professional development and reflection on professional practice). These form the final two components of the framework from Coe et al. (2014) that we introduced earlier. However, there is too little in the available literature that considers beliefs and professional behaviours as components shared by teachers and TAs. It is our argument that TAs and teachers need to develop shared beliefs about teaching and learning and therefore need opportunities to co-construct these through shared professional development opportunities, and through reflecting on practice together.

At the school, we developed a professional community of learners via "network meetings". These professional development sessions began as TA Forum sessions. TAs from the local area and our own team would come along to keynote speaker sessions which featured a range of academic speakers. This has since developed into whole team professional development meetings every week (see https://unlockingresearch.org). This shared professional development has strengthened the team and improved pedagogical understanding about what is necessary to educate children identified with additional educational needs. It has also been a positive shift away from a deficit narrative about children and their learning. We have forged relationships with teachers who work in special schools who have helped us to develop a shared understanding of high quality teaching in mainstream classrooms. For example, through working with one school we have changed our planning cycle for children who are working below the national curriculum expectations. We also worked with a school who have supported the team with a playful approach to learning activities; speech and language support; and guidance on the Engagement Model. A relationship has been established with these schools and we continue to work with them.

Thinking about recommendation 4:

What professional development is available to TAs in your school?

What professional development has been run for teachers or TAs this year which could have been available as a joint teacher/TA session?

The Importance of Relationships

Education does not occur in a vacuum; relationships must be built. Firstly, with the children and then with other educators and schools. Last year, colleagues spent time reflecting in a more focused way on all children in their classrooms. Each member of the Learning Coach team wrote a case study, whilst teachers focused on the definition of high quality teaching. The case studies

made for powerful reading and were hugely insightful. Each case study written by the Learning Coach provided a bridge for the teacher to enter the child's world.

Our Learning Coach gatherings have allowed us to step into the world of a child identified with SEND. Only then could we truly understand their needs and what we need to do as educators to meet their needs. Giangreco (2017) describes the relationship making process by using his friend's analogy of a bicycle. Giangreco's friend, whose son has Angelmen's syndrome, advocates a move away from the deficit model of children who have special educational needs as substandard (a broken bicycle). She prefers to think of her son as a stunning Italian bicycle (Yuan, 2003 in Giangreco, 2017). It is important for all those who work with a child to take the time to understand their beauty, intricacies, and fine workings. Once these elements are understood, education happens. Both educators and child become two cogs working seamlessly as the wheels of curriculum and belonging spin in unison.

Conclusion: Towards inclusive educational practice

Inclusive pedagogy and practices will never be satisfactory until TAs are not only valued but included in the debate about inclusion in schools. The authors' view is that they are too often excluded in this debate, and consequently they do not have a voice or platform to make their unique contribution to the discussion, and to share the impactful strategies that work for the children they learn alongside daily. Slee (2011, p. 39) suggests:

> 'Too frequently theorists of inclusive education commence without technical considerations of the means for achieving inclusion. Inclusive education is thus reduced to a list of policies, strategies and resources. These activities to pursue inclusive education represent a necessary and important discussion, but it must be the second order discussion. The first requirement is to establish our goals and our aspirations'.

What we have aimed to achieve in this chapter is a discussion of some key considerations for school leaders, teachers and TAs, and some helpful strategies for maximising the work of TAs. However, what we hope that we have also highlighted is the need to start from a consideration of how to build shared goals and attitudes to inclusive practice through research-led practice which includes TAs as key to children's learning

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