



Network Newsletter

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www.suffolktanetwork.co.uk

Coordinator's Comments

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

As teaching assistants, we often lack the time and opportunity to find out what other TAs are doing, share ideas and learn from each other. This is one of the main reasons I am so passionate about the Suffolk TA Network, and supporting other counties to develop their own.

As a member of the network, you are part of a thriving professional community of education practitioners with a with range of skills and experience.

The focus of this edition of the newsletter is to expose you to the fantastic TA practice that takes place in our county through a series of 'A Day in the Life of...' articles. You will also discover flyers and adverts for various training and networking events that might be of interest.

I am aware how busy schools are and how little time you have, but I hope something in here will be able to make you feel part of our wider TA family.



Join Us

If you are not already a member of the Suffolk TA Network, please join via the following link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=UyUudcf3sEGK8GkwZaFwfVhZAzV7zulGsO_6uPBfMz5UQkZBNOJRR0hUMehYMzFHOTdYTENHRIFDSi4u

Simply click on this link or copy it into the URL bar on your browser and complete the Microsoft Forms document. You will then receive the half-termly newsletter and other correspondence.

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A Day in the Life of a Teaching Assistant in a Further Education Setting

By Sally Eves

It is dark on a cold, wet, wintery morning. The alarm rings with a shrill that can't be ignored, so easy to click the snooze button and roll over and doze... but thoughts of the day ahead begin to creep in. I have been asked to write a short review of a day as a Learning Support Practitioner in an FE College. What shall I write about? No two days are really ever the same. That of course could apply to any TA role, so which one of my days will I describe?

Will it be the first day of an academic year, new beginnings, new faces, new names to learn, new expectations, no one knowing where they are meant to be or how to get there? Such a large building to negotiate and everything so unfamiliar.

Maybe I should talk about working in the Carpentry Workshop, learning traditional joinery skills – Mortice & Tenon or Dovetail joints - where, at the end of one year, I was the proud owner of my own bird box (still to be chosen as an ideal residence by any blue tits). Or a day working in the college kitchens, preparing food for the Restaurant - Chef's Whites, open to the public, and snack foods to be sold at break and lunch time to staff and students in the atrium. Fridays – yes, I could talk about Fridays with the all-day fried breakfast.

Or will it be a day in a Forensics class - Chemistry and Physics in a traditional laboratory setting; then looking into causes of death, understanding features that enable the identification of a skeleton found in a clandestine grave and analysing stages of bodily decomposition? Carrying out some fingerprinting and working out which pen was used to write a ransom note?

I could write about the Remembrance Day parade put on so professionally by the Public Services students every year, marking the significance of this important occasion. I could tell you about the Carol Service that music students perform just before Christmas in the atrium whilst staff and students are enjoying their lunch. Then there are the performances throughout the year staged by the Performing Arts students.



Growing out of collaboration and partnership

I might talk about a day in Games Design, after all we have got our brand-new Tech Campus. This is one of the most popular areas of the college, but does anybody actually know what E-sports really are? One of my favourite days to write about would be in Art & Design, printmaking, 3D, Graphics or textiles as well as drawing and painting skills. Of course, I could talk about evening classes, note taking in a GCSE Biology lesson (the tutor asks if I would like to be entered for the GCSE exam? Luckily, I am able to say 'No thank you', I already have this from school days).

Or shall I tell you about a quiet day when almost nothing happens. One of the dark, cold, wet wintery days when I listen to a student telling me about their weekend, their football game or new kitten, their aspirations over a packed lunch or cheesy chips.

Sometimes I work alone but I am part of a large, vibrant and supportive team - I regard myself as a facilitator. Whichever day I decide to tell you about it will be filled with a variety of interests, kindness, compassion and it will be a privilege to work alongside some incredible young people on the threshold of their future.

The alarm rings again ... now what will I make for my packed lunch?

Outdoor Education in a Secondary Setting

By Caroline Williamson

At Westbourne, we have a SEMH team of four TAs who deliver a suite of interventions, including Thrive, ELSA, Drawing & Talking and outdoor learning.

Over Christmas, students in the outdoor learning groups worked together to create wreaths with a range of natural resources. Here is an example of their amazing work.

This activity developed their listening and spoken communication skills and also improved their confidence and self-esteem. The students were so proud of their creative efforts and even inspired some staff to make their own!



Growing out of collaboration and partnership



A Day in the Life of a Teaching Assistant in a Primary Setting

By Carron Lynch

Hello everyone! My name is Carron Lynch and I have a background in horticulture. I have worked for 5 years now in various education settings. Initially, I started out volunteering with school gardening as well as becoming a cover supervisor in a secondary setting.

I then progressed into a primary setting working as a TA in the classroom or 1:1 and have found that I am hugely passionate about connecting with children especially those who are vulnerable.

As a more mature TA, I have found the training provided by the network has been very useful as it keeps you up-to-date with current research and resources to use, and it has given me the confidence to try new things. I especially liked the idea of getting to know a particular child for a certain amount of time. This is a great technique to use when greeting the pupils in the morning. This has proved very successful as one child wanted to know more about 'Concorde'. After a chat with him, it inspired him to do some research and give a mini talk in front of the whole class. I was so proud that I had contributed to having a positive impact on his confidence and learning.

My role is varied and hard work but hugely rewarding as I work with a broad spectrum of children. I try my best to ensure that the children are ready for learning by using the 'Hi-5' technique, modelling behaviour, reinforcing the teacher's input by bending down to the child's level and using my scaffolding techniques, such as telling the child key words to start them off. This all helps towards supporting their independent learning.

For those children whose confidence has been knocked or display behaviour issues within my classroom, I find techniques such as distraction, humour and green spaces are great for their physical and mental wellbeing.

I love getting involved in Nature Club and at lunchtimes I supervise the play area in the woodlands. I can take the time to really get to know the children, following the children's lead as they use their skills, such as singing, socialising with each other, feeling the warmth of the sun on their face or exploring for bugs!

All in all, I believe that we must constantly praise the children to encourage them to never give up when things are hard and learn how good it feels to succeed!



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A Day in the Life of a Teaching Assistant with a Specialism in Dyslexia

By Emma Pearce

Typically, like most reading this I'm sure, my day often starts not how it has been planned. Commonplace, last-minute preparations, upset children, unforeseen absence often ensure that (joyfully!) no one morning is the same as the next! As the children in my class (currently a boisterous boy-heavy bunch of 6/7 year olds!) head in for the day, I can be seen attempting(!) to settle the tide...stemming the flow as it were of questions, queries, items that require immediate attention – often awesome artefacts from home – pretty hairbands, football medals, new books*, recently deceased teeth, gaps where they once were etc etc!

The hurricane of (mostly) testosterone sweeps through in waves, catching all in its wake, loud, tremendous, full of the most jumpiest of beans! Through the ecstatic storm, my role is to focus and calm, particularly those children who struggle, not just with literacy, which one might typically associate with dyslexia, but those who are easily overwhelmed and need a gentle reminder of what comes first in our day. Habitual repetition is not enough for these children, their short-term memory just doesn't want to hold on to it in the way others can. Despite the routine daily practices of same old same old, for them their brains ask, 'what's new?'.

Content and focussed, these children are the ones who will later join me for phonics teaching and intervention. At this young age diagnosis makes no difference to the first quality teaching that these children access. Below the magic number 8, they are simply defined as lower ability and thus require additional support in, not the understanding of tasks, but the completion of such. Often full of knowledge and ideas these children are verbally phenomenal. There is nothing they cannot explain to me in the greatest of detail.

In our writing task one child clearly and confidently provides me with a dictionary perfect definition of 'pure' that would put Collins to shame but putting this onto paper requires literal handholding, gentle persuasion, and the occasional bribe! Oh, for a £1 for every "Finish the sentence and then you can...!"

Hand-tired and worn out – dyslexic learners use five times more energy than a non-dyslexic learner – the playground beckons. Imagination awaits.

Post lunch, I can be found delving into the brains of those with similar superpowers further up the school. Children with an abundance of knowledge and talent. I have, just this last term, become upskilled in my knowledge of basketball (mostly the American league apparently!), tennis, Minecraft, horse-riding, how to care for a new puppy, and the latest Sing movie thanks to these pupils. In amongst the assessment and identification of gaps, the multisensory intervention games and



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activities**, the reading practice***, and the filling of said gaps, these children share with me a chink of their light, a sprinkling of the sparkle that makes them who they are. How lucky I am.

*The most recent one being 'You are 25% Banana' by Susie Brooks. Highly recommended for all young scientists.

**No intervention is complete without my trusty wooden alphabet letters.

***Current favourite for my Year 5 reluctant readers is 'Rising Stars Guinness World Record Reading Comprehension'. All have tried (and failed) to beat the record of 17 spoons balanced on your face!



When are literacy difficulties dyslexia, and how should we intervene?

At what point does difficulty with reading, writing and communication become dyslexia? Join Driver Youth Trust on 21st March at 7pm for our next free Community Roundtable event as our Head of Innovation and Learning Kelly Challis runs through a masterclass in literacy difficulties and dyslexia, and our community members share their experience and recommendations of interventions and classroom practices that support all learners.

Discussion points:

- **Dyslexia or literacy difficulties:** when are difficulties with reading, writing and language dyslexia, and should our support and interventions be different?
- **Risk and resilience:** exploring research by Muter (2021) into the role of risk and resilience in the diagnosis of dyslexia and developing support.
- **Interventions and classroom practice:** which interventions and adjustments have community members had success with and in which context?

About this event:

- Date: 21st March 2022 Time: 7 – 8pm Price: FREE!

The DYT Community is a space for educational professionals to come together to tackle the issues facing teachers, schools, and learners today, with a focus on SEND and literacy difficulties. Our community is free, and open to everyone with an interest in education and inclusion. All of our roundtables are run free of charge.

[Sign up for FREE now!](#)



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A Day in the Life of a Teaching Assistant with a Specialism in Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

By Becky Paul

Speech, language and communication forms part of our life skills. They are linked to learning, attainment, behaviour, social and emotional development, as well as wellbeing. This is why it is important that we support children and young people with developing these crucial skills.

Ongoing training develops a better understanding of this specific area. It helps build knowledge and skills that will support students with their development. Ongoing training reinforces what I am doing, highlights new strategies and also boosts confidence within my role.

In addition to ongoing training, I have the support of a local Specialist Teacher for Speech, Language and Communication. We work together, creating plans to support speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) within the Academy. I have received lots of help and support, links with other schools have been created and she has been in school for observations, where she has given her expertise and knowledge to support me in my role.

To identify which students to work with, my SENDCo sends me referrals and then I use Secondary Speech Link, which is a program that offers assessments, interventions and resources. Data collected from the assessment is very detailed and highlights areas of weakness and gives you interventions to work on with the students. In addition to this, it gives recommendations on whether they need one-to-one or group interventions and provides strategies to work on.

Currently, I am only able to offer one-to-one specialist interventions and the work we do in sessions depends on the area the student needs to work on. I have created a number of activities and resources to support students during their sessions. I find that students are often different with you on a one-to-one basis and tend to work really well and want to learn and achieve. It's a great opportunity to get to know them better and build strong, positive relationships, which really helps you to support them more effectively in lessons.



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I see students twice a week for a 20-minute session. For the students who have speech as their area, we have an introductory session that focuses on their voice, clarity, fluency and tone. We do mouth and facial exercises, use acronyms for simple steps whilst talking and going over phonics. The main sessions involve fun and interactive activities that encourage speech practice.

If a student needs to work on communication and language, the sessions are different. The first few sessions are for getting to know the student, then we look at doing some exercises around communication, followed by some academic activities. Once these are complete, we do fun, interactive activities that focus on specific areas, such as following instructions, social interaction, understanding vocabulary and concepts.

Normally, after the initial sessions, I would work with a student for 16 sessions, then have a break, check in on them and pick up sessions again, if needed. All the details of sessions are logged and any relevant information is communicated to the SENDCo and teaching staff, along with any strategies that can be used to support the student in lessons. The goal is for the student to take the skills they learn in sessions and use these in their lessons to become independent with the strategies and also be able to manage their own behaviour better.

Moving forward, I would like to be able to assess more students and start up group interventions. These would run once a week over an eight-week period per intervention, followed by a two-week break before beginning again on the next level of the intervention.



Save the Date

TA Conference

SLCN theme

**Friday 16th September
2022**

Trinity Park, Ipswich

Tickets available soon



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Regional Online TA Networking Opportunities

TA Networking Session (South Suffolk) – **Friday 25th March 11.00-12.00**



Calling all TAs/HLTAs/LSAs who work in South Suffolk Schools. You are warmly invited to come along to our first online regional networking session. Expect to meet other TAs in your area, find out what they do and have the opportunity to share best practice. We will be focusing on our wellbeing and you will have the opportunity to let us know what you want from the network and from me as your Champion. Please bring with you your favourite recipe! I look forward to meeting with you - Emma (Champion South Suffolk)

TA Networking Session (West Suffolk) – **Tuesday 5th April 14.30-15.30**



Calling all TAs/LSAs/HLTAs who work in schools in West Suffolk – come along to our first online regional networking session. This is a great chance to meet other TAs, have a chat and network with each other. We can share best practice and have a chance to reflect on our own wellbeing. It is also an opportunity to let us know what sort of articles you might like to see in the newsletter and any ideas you have for future training. I look forward to meeting you all virtually, and hopefully face-to-face in the future.
– Justine (Champion West Suffolk)

TA Networking Session (North Suffolk) – **Monday 28th March 14.00-15.00**



Calling all TAs/LSAs/HLTAs who work in schools in North Suffolk – come along to our first online regional networking session. This is a great chance to get to know other TAs and share tips and ideas and take some time out to reflect on our own wellbeing. We would also love to hear your ideas about any articles you might like to see in the newsletter and any specific training topics you would like to see covered in our termly programmes. We look forward to meeting you all and getting to know you. – Carolyn & Julie (TA Network Assistant Coordinators)

TO REQUEST A TEAMS LINK FOR ONE OF THESE SESSIONS,
PLEASE EMAIL ME:

SUFFOLKTAN@WESTBOURNE.ATTRUST.ORG.UK



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Training Opportunities



These sessions are being delivered by Eileen Allpress from the Ipswich Associate Research School. They will cover what the EEF says about behaviour interventions, effective classroom strategies and changes since COVID.

Behaviour Training Sessions

Focus on behaviour in KS3 and above

Tuesday 15th March

Morning – 9.30-10.30, Afternoon – 13.30-14.30 or Twilight – 16.30-17.30

To find out more information and to sign up for one of these sessions please email me: suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk



Metacognition: growing stronger relationships to learning

Evidence suggests the use of 'metacognitive strategies' – which get pupils to think about their own learning – can be worth the equivalent of an additional +7 months' progress when used well. However, while the potential impact of these approaches is very high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, less is known about how to apply them effectively in the classroom. This session will outline and share a number of practical approaches teaching assistants can use in their work with pupils which translate key principles in to practice and develop their pupils' metacognitive skills and knowledge.

Thursday 5th May

Afternoon – 13.30-14.30 or Twilight – 16.30-17.30

To find out more information and to sign up for one of these sessions please email me: suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk



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Secondary Mathematics CPD: Free Twilight Sessions this Spring and Summer!

Schools new to Angles Maths Hub
are warmly welcomed and
encouraged to attend.

All sessions are free of charge

Angles Maths Hub is excited to welcome a range of guest speakers from the world of Maths education to deliver a series of online sessions for secondary teachers and teaching assistants.

Our free, one-hour, twilight sessions allow teachers and TAs to engage with and consider a variety of key Maths topics. Each session will be delivered twice, across the Spring and Summer terms and will all be online, 4pm - 5pm

How to Support pupils with Maths Anxiety - an introduction

Associate Professor Sue Johnston-Wilder, Warwick University

Recognising Maths Anxiety and strategies to support students in the classroom

Thursday 24th March or Thursday 12th May

Preparing for the 2022 GCSE exams

Representatives from AQA and Edexcel

What every teacher needs to know to prepare students for the upcoming GCSE exams

AQA: Tuesday 8th March Edexcel: Thursday 10th March

Supporting Covid Recovery - using NCETM Checkpoints

Becky Donaldson - NCETM Assistant Director of Secondary

Checkpoints are diagnostic activities that will help teachers assess the understanding and suggest ways to address any gaps that become evident.

Wednesday 16th March or Wednesday 8th June

Developing Conceptual Understanding in Maths - through the use of Manipulatives

Christina Feilden - Angles Maths Hub Work Group Lead

An introduction to double sided counters and algebra tiles to strengthen understanding

Double Sided Counters: Wednesday 2nd March or Wednesday 4th May Algebra

Tiles: Wednesday 30th March or Wednesday 25th May

Learning to Lead Professional Development - training opportunities for teachers

Sam Phillips & Charlotte Martin - Angles Leadership team

The NCETM have a range of funded programmes for those looking to deliver Maths training in the future

Wednesday 9th March or Wednesday 18th May

Using Technology to support learning at A Level

Tom Marjoram - Angles Work Group Lead

How to use the Casio 991ex Classwiz calculator to support learning in A Level Maths

Thursday 10th March or Wednesday 27th April

How to survive an Ofsted Maths Deep Dive - Details to be confirmed

To register your interest for any sessions please complete the short Google form [HERE](#)

To get in touch, please contact us using the details below:

W: anglesmathshub.org | E: admin@anglesmathshub.org | T: 01603 280940 | [Express your interest](#)



The University of Bedfordshire's 2nd Regional Conference for
Teaching Assistants

The value of teaching assistants

March 30th 10am-12.50pm

Dear Teaching Assistant,

As part of our commitment to supporting the region's teaching assistants we are pleased to offer you an opportunity to attend **The University of Bedfordshire's 2nd Regional Conference for Teaching Assistants**, *The value of teaching assistants*, on March 30th 10am-12.50pm completely for free.

Whether you have worked with us before or not, you should be aware that our ethos here at The University of Bedfordshire is about widening participation. We want to ensure that teaching assistants have just as strong CPD as teachers as we see education as a community of practice. We took advice about the timing and have pitched it between 10-12.50pm so that you can attend during the day. You might join together with other assistants to attend the conference as a group, or it might be you each have your own log in.

An outline of the conference and a letter for your headteacher have been emailed to all members of the Suffolk TA Network. If you are not currently a member and would like a copy, please email suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk. Please forward the outline and letter to your headteacher in order that you get permission to attend the conference. Please visit this [link](#) to let us know if you are intending to attend the conference. If the link does not work, please email Allyson Goodchild with details and she will register you for the event.

If you would like to know anything more about the conference, please write to us directly at either james.shea@beds.ac.uk or allyson.goodchild@beds.ac.uk.

Kind regards

Dr James Shea, Principal Lecturer in Teacher Education

Allyson Goodchild, Senior Tutor in Education Studies

Research Corner

LBL Reflections – Improving Behaviour in Schools

In the last edition of the newsletter, Learning Behaviour Leads (LBLs), reflected on the [EEF Guidance on Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning](#). These highly skilled educational professionals, recruited through the Ipswich Opportunity Area, have continued their training programme, focusing on the EEF guidance on the 5 pillars of the [“Learning Behaviour” framework](#) – Metacognition, Social and Emotional Learning, Behaviour, SEND and Parental Engagement.

Here, one of these Learning Behaviour Leads reflects on applying the [EEF Guidance on Improving Behaviour in Schools](#) in their setting.

“The LBL training has united individuals across schools in the Ipswich area, inspiring us to take up the reins with regard to learning behaviours. We all have a common goal of understanding challenging behaviours and educating those adults in a learning environment to be curious about the cause of the behaviour and how to repair rather than punish. LBL training has allowed us to network, share good practice and support one another.”



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Resource Information



This term we welcomed another four amazing speakers to our network information sessions. One of these speakers was Hannah Harris, who is one of the writers for Twinkl's educational update service - the Twinkl Digest. I wanted to take this opportunity to share information about this resource with our whole membership.

This online blog provides daily jargon-free, up-to-date information for all educators. They currently have 11 writers who each write for a different segment audience - trainee teachers, EYFS, KS1, KS2, SEND, secondary school, SLT, parents & SEND parents and, of course, you wonderful teaching assistants (TAs). Hannah is the writer for Twinkl's TA Digest.

Digest articles are published every day and there's also a roundup of the weekly articles published at the weekend - so if you don't have time during the week to read, you can catch up at a time that is more convenient for you. They produce a mix of video and written articles.

The Twinkl Digest follows the latest educational trends, updates and current affairs and has a wide range of articles that are relevant to the work of teaching assistants, such as '7 steps that TAs can implement to build pupil independence'. You can read all articles by following this link:

www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/author/hannah-harris

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