

Scaffolding

RBWM Teaching Assistant Training

Anne Bishop

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Thinking point:

- What does scaffolding mean to you?
- Think of a time when you or someone else has scaffolded an activity. Was it successful in supporting the pupil to make progress? Why?

Agenda

What does the research tell us?

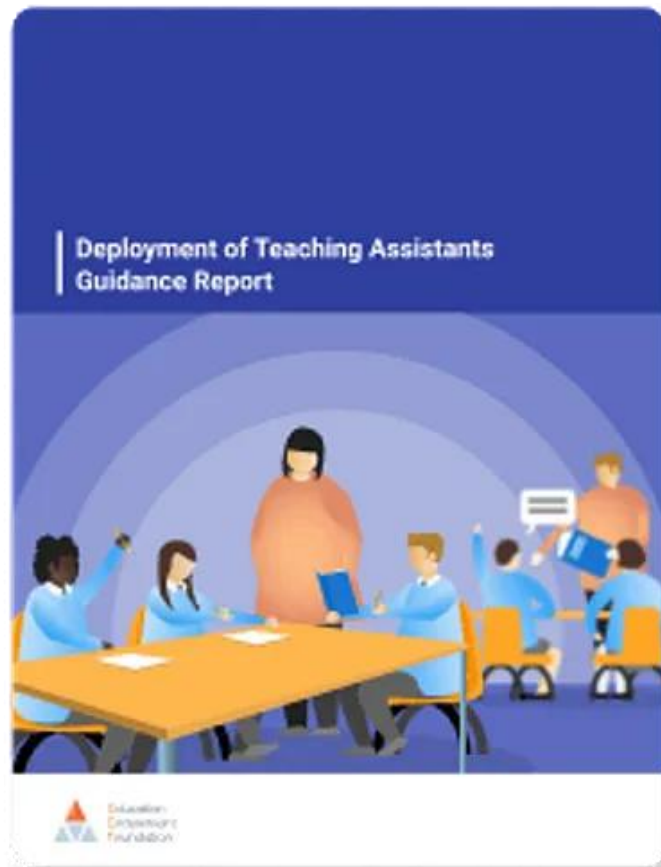
What is scaffolding?

The scaffolding process

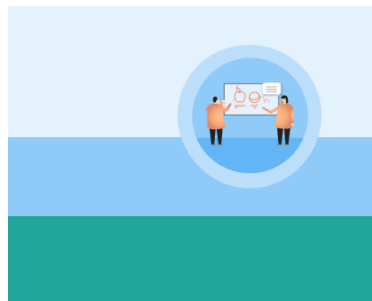
Scaffolding aids

Key takeaways

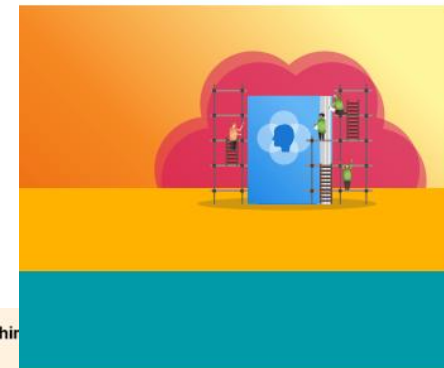
What does the research tell us?



MAKING BEST USE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS Guidance Report



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS Guidance Report



The 'Five-a-day' principle: High quality teaching

- 1 Explicit instruction
- 2 Cognitive and metacognitive strategies
- 3 Scaffolding
- 4 Flexible grouping
- 5 Using technology



Deployment of Teaching Assistants Guidance Report



Deployment of Teaching Assistants Summary of recommendations

Effective practices

1

Deploy TAs in ways that enable all pupils to access high-quality teaching

TAs should supplement – not replace – the teacher. This means that pupils who struggle most should spend at least as much time with the teacher as other pupils, if not more.

- Ensure all pupils have access to high-quality teaching with their class teacher.
- Ensure working relationships between teachers and TAs meet all pupils' needs, with the teacher retaining responsibility for all pupils.
- Support teachers and TAs to identify practices which inhibit pupil learning and engage in effective alternatives.

2

Deploy TAs to scaffold learning and to develop pupils' independence

Leaders should ensure TAs are prepared to engage in scaffolding practices that support pupils' learning and ability to learn independently. Supporting pupil independence should be a key consideration of TA deployment.

- Equip TAs with a range of scaffolding strategies appropriate to the age, subject, and specific individual needs of pupils they work with.
- Remove scaffolds over time to promote independent learning, with teachers supporting TAs to make those judgements.
- Ensure pupils have the opportunity to attempt tasks independently before intervening appropriately when they can't proceed.

3

Deploy TAs to deliver well-chosen, evidence based, structured interventions where appropriate

The evidence shows that TAs can support pupils effectively through structured interventions. However, these need to be carefully considered, monitored, and linked to the classroom to ensure positive outcomes for pupils.

- Reflect on the purpose of interventions and engage with the evidence base before deploying TAs to deliver structured interventions.
- Monitor progress to be sure the benefit of the intervention outweighs time away from the classroom.
- Support teachers and TAs to engage in bridging practices that connect learning between interventions and the classroom.

Effective implementation

4

Prepare and train staff around effective TA deployment

School leaders should ensure staff are on the same page about the role of the TA and how they can most effectively support pupils. Ensuring teachers and TAs are well prepared to work in these roles increases the likelihood that TA deployment can have a positive impact on pupils.

- Provide clarity on the role of the TA for all in the school.
- Enable TAs to be effective in their role and teachers to work effectively with TAs, through effective professional development.
- Develop ongoing coordination and communication so that teachers and TAs are prepared for their day-to-day roles.

5

Engage all staff in the process of implementing effective TA deployment

Effective TA deployment is complex and dependent on a range of factors. School leaders should focus on implementation as they look to embed effective practices.

- Ensure TA deployment is informed by both the underpinning evidence and the challenges of putting it into practice.
- Engage and align the school community to build a shared understanding of good TA practice.
- Be deliberate about deployment decisions, which should be taken in the context of the school and its current priorities.

What does the research tell us?

Deployment of Teaching Assistants Summary of recommendations (EEF 2025)

2

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What is scaffolding?

- ▶ Temporary support that allows the pupil to move towards independence
- ▶ Provides the support pupils need, but not more than they need.
- ▶ Scaffolds can be visual, verbal or written
- ▶ Recognising mini goals within the activity/ task
- ▶ Promotes confidence and competence in pupils
- ▶ Knowing when to step in (not stepping back)
- ▶ Avoids learned helplessness
- ▶ Steps to independence



Why scaffolding?

- Greater independence
- Coping with learning challenges and setbacks
- Learning for learning's sake
- Accessing other adults for support
- Greater opportunities for peer interaction
- Less risk of stigmatisation

Steps to independence?

1

What parts can they do? Persistent and consistent expectation

Assumption that the task is appropriate-task is not too easy or too hard.

2

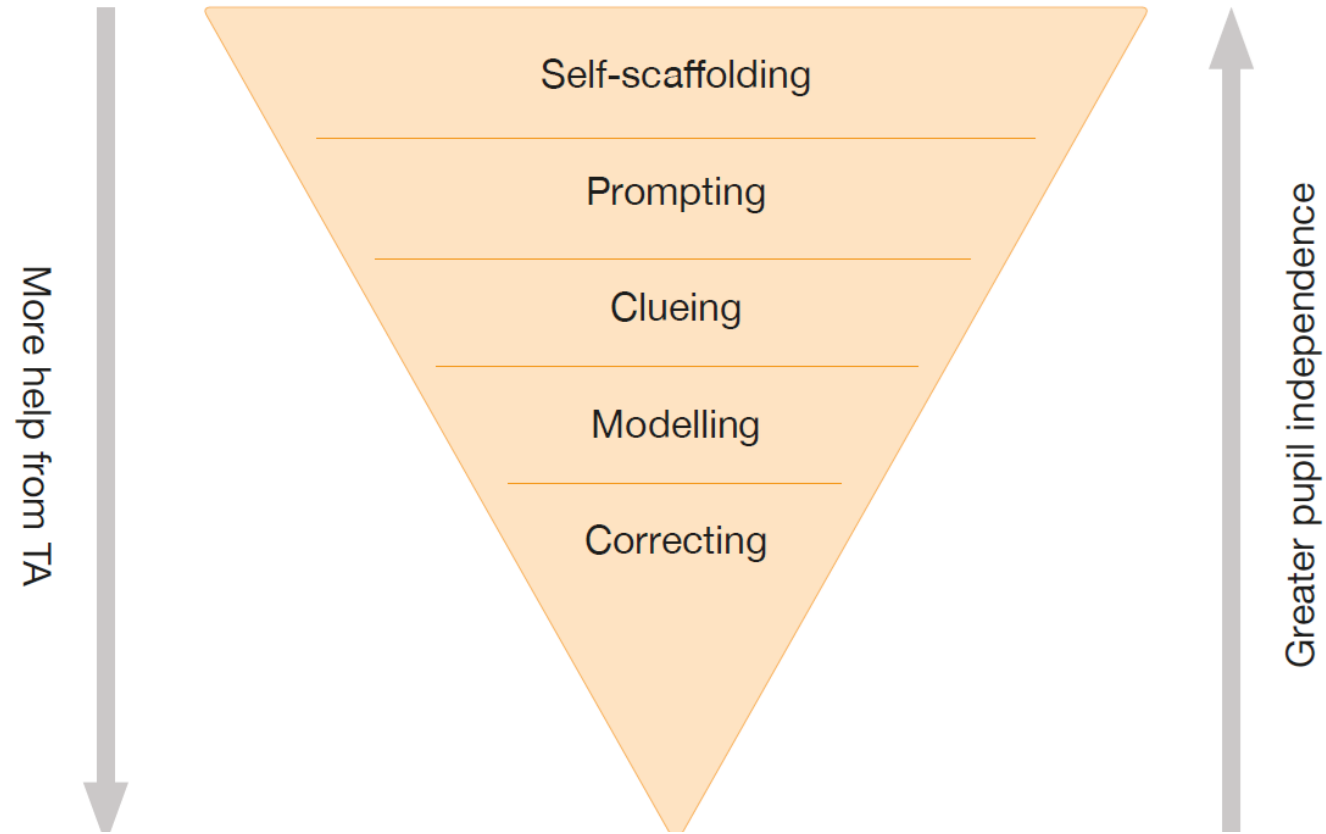
Pupil attempts challenging parts using strategies learned via adult interactions

3

Pupil does all parts independently confidently and competently

This stage is consolidation and it is important this stage is completed

Framework for scaffolding: least amount of help first



Adapted from: Bosanquet, P., Radford, J. and Webster, R. (2016) *The teaching assistant's guide to effective interaction: How to maximise your practice*, published by Routledge.

Self-scaffolding

- ▶ Initial step whilst adult observes their performance
- ▶ Least amount of support first
- ▶ Adult gives time for processing and thinking
- ▶ Self-scaffolders know how to approach a task, problem-solve and review
- ▶ Self-scaffolders demonstrate high levels of independence
- ▶ Know how to use the resources available

Prompting

- ▶ Adult prompts when pupils are unable to self-scaffold
- ▶ Encourages pupils to draw on own knowledge- remember to do something they already know how to do.
- ▶ Adult provides the stepping stone into deploying self-scaffolding techniques
- ▶ Wait time and silence
- ▶ Questioning
- ▶ Allows pupils to attempt challenging parts

Prompting: wait time and silence

Ginny *(reading)* Here are

TA *(5 second pause)*

Ginny *(looks at TA)*

TA *(smiles)*

Ginny *(running finger along word)* ic ic icles *(gives puzzled look)*

TA *(7 second pause)*

Ginny *(moves finger to start of sentence)* Here are...hanging on the branches. *(looks at picture)* Oh icicles.

Prompting: knowing what to do when you don't know what to do

What do you think you could do?

What is your plan?

I'm not sure. Can you remember what the teacher said?

So, you're not sure about that word. How could you work it out?'

Prompting: gesture

TA And then what was this one?

Clare Then we saw *(5 second pause)*

TA *(points at prompt sheet)*

Clare *(picks up a pen and writes) I remember. It was the Banksy.*

Clueing

- ▶ Providing a hook to remind students of what they know
- ▶ Giving clues to support pupil solve the problem
- ▶ Questions that provide a hint

Two ways of clueing:

- Give a statement with information in.

E.g. The T on the protractor is important.

- Ask a question, the answer to which moves them on.

E.g. What did Mr Webb do with the T on the protractor?

Clueing

Nicole (*sighs*)

TA Come on Nicole. You remember sh

Nicole I remember, but

TA Shhhop. What comes first? Two letters

Nicole S H

TA Well done, sh

Modelling

- ▶ When the task requires new skill or strategy
- ▶ Adult models the task while pupils actively watch and listen
- ▶ Pupil completes same steps for themselves directly following the modelling
- ▶ Adult provides the structure for challenging task

Tips:

Talk your thought process out loud

Refer to previous learning or resources that you will use to help you with the task you are modelling

Golden rules for modelling

- Only model the step the student is stuck on
- Ease cognitive load with short, clear models
- Provide commentary in the first person: *'I am writing...'*
- Prime students to look and listen: *'I want you to watch me and listen carefully so you can try it by yourself next'*
- Students must attempt task themselves directly after a step has been modelled. Encourage them to give it a go

Correcting

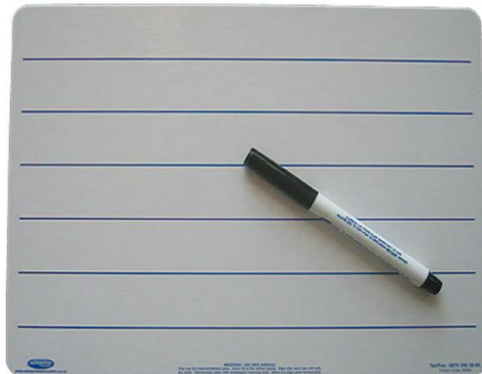
- ▶ Greatest help from adult
- ▶ No independent thinking
- ▶ Reflect on the difficulty of the task when this step is necessary
- ▶ Use in exceptional circumstances

TA teaching strategies that encourage and inhibit independent learning

Avoid	Encourage
✗ Prioritising task completion	✓ Pupils to be comfortable taking risks with their learning
✗ Preventing pupils from having enough thinking and response time	✓ Providing the right amount of support at the right time
✗ 'Stereo-teaching' (repeating verbatim what the teacher says)	✓ Pupils retain responsibility for their learning
✗ High use of closed questions	✓ Use of open ended questions
✗ Over-prompting and spoon-feeding	✓ Giving the least amount of help first to support pupils' ownership of the task

Scaffolding aids

- ▶ Visual aids
- ▶ Pre-teaching
- ▶ Breaking down into steps
- ▶ Sentence starters
- ▶ Writing frames
- ▶ Feedback
- ▶ Collaborative learning



To create a story with an issue or dilemma.

Opening: Draw and label your main characters.	Opening: Draw and label your setting.
What is the problem in your story?	
Draw and describe how the problem is solved.	



To complete this task, I will...



My Task Management Board

Task: → What equipment do I need?

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>



Key takeaways