

Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area Teaching Assistant Network Newsletter



Dear Colleagues,

Hello and welcome to our first Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area (FECO) TA newsletter. We hope you find the information useful.

The FECOA TA Network has been set up so that all support staff, in all settings, can collaborate, have a voice, and share good practice. We want you to have access to CPD that you feel is relevant your role.

We will release a termly newsletter, commission or signpost you to training, and most importantly shine a spotlight on the needs of TAs in FECOA. To gain the most useful insights, we will also be offering an online meeting each term to share your views about what you would like to see from your network.

Our next steps are to initiate the role of school-based TA Champions across the OA. They will help us shape our strategy to make it meaningful. Once you have registered you will receive an invite to our first online session. We also welcome information and book reviews for the newsletter.

In this issue you will find several offers of free high-quality CPD. This is only the start and with our partnerships with University of Cambridge Primary School, the Teaching School Hub, EEF and Cambridge County Council we are sure to that you will see something of interest.

Exciting times - please do pass this onto your colleagues and encourage them to sign up.

Many Thanks,

The FEC OA Team

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JOIN US

Please complete this form to become a member of the FECOA TA Network via the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSckiYeXdUWBEV5UjJr2GSdQpGya1GsyvCf19drvZJ5Tk4WFbA/viewform?usp=sf_link

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 newsletter and other correspondence.

Do you have something to share?

Run a brilliant intervention?

Offer excellent classroom support?

Have an interesting story to tell?

Read a TA related book you would like to review or found a book for a reluctant reader then this is the space to share it.

Email us Jayne.Robinson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk with your idea and you could be in the next edition

FECOIA Webinar Series

The OA Webinar Series is hosted on the Knowledge Hub platform. To access the series, you will need a free Knowledge Hub account:

Go to <https://khub.net/sign-up>

Complete your details and verify your account – you will be sent an email to verify

Sign in and accept the site terms

Sign-up can be whole-school or individual depending on your preference.

View the OA Webinar Series Knowledge Hub [oa-webinar-series-knowledge-hub-step-by-step-guide.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#) for full details on how to access the series.

All of the sessions below have been commissioned by FECOA and are available via the webinar series:

English for TAs – CCC

FECOIA have commissioned Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to produce a series of pre-recorded webinars focused on supporting teaching assistants (TAs) with assisting English and Maths teaching. You can view a short [introduction video](#) about the English series.

SESSION 1 Writing

SESSION 2 Phonics and Spelling

SESSION 3 Reading

Maths for TAs - CCC

You can view a short [introduction video](#) about the Maths series.

SESSION 1 [Effective Use of TAs](#)

SESSION 2 [Guided Group Work](#)

SESSION 3 [Questioning](#)

SESSION 4 [Mathematical Talk](#)

SESSION 5 [Counting and Number](#)

SESSION 6 [Calculations](#)

Speech and Language - Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust

1. The speech and language offer for schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
2. Understanding spoken language: how to support understanding in the classroom
3. Wonderful words: How to develop vocabulary in the classroom
4. Great Grammar: supporting grammar in the classroom
5. Narrative skills: supporting narrative in the classroom
6. Super Speech: working with children's speech

EEF- Free online training

[Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants online course | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Course Overview The “Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants online course” has 6 modules. Each module takes around 7/8 minutes and is engaging with videos and supporting research.

Module 1 considers your school's context

Module 2 looks at TA deployment

Module 3 investigates the best way for TA's to prepare

Module 4 explores interventions

Module 5 making connections

Module 6 planning your next steps.

BOOK REVIEW

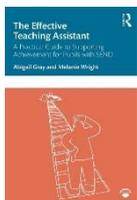
Please share what you are reading from children's books to education articles.



Teaching Assistant's Pocketbook
2nd Edition by Dot Constable £9.99

This little book is literally small enough to carry in your pocket. It covers the key aspects of a teaching assistant's role in easy to access, bite-sized chunks. The tone is often relaxed and light-hearted with comical illustrations. Although I feel this book contains plenty of useful information, it may be more relevant to TAs new to the profession.

By Abi Joachim



Abigail Gray, author of *The Effective Teaching Assistant: A Practical Guide to Supporting Achievement*

Will be sharing her knowledge and classroom strategies with members of the UK TA Hub on **Thursday 3rd February, 4:30pm-5:20pm**
Book via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/discussion-with-abigail-gray-tickets-255991787327>

The team at **Tapestry** worked with **Cherry Garden School**, an outstanding special school for pupils from 2-11 years old in the London Borough of Southwark to bring their assessment framework to life on Tapestry. Using their years of special educational needs teaching experience and by building on parts of the popular Routes for Learning framework, Cherry Garden have created a unique, child centred framework for students working at a level expected for typically developing children aged 0-5, with additional bridging branch maps 11 and 12 in key areas at a level expected in Year 1. (Please attend both sessions)

10th February & 3rd March 4:30pm-5:30pm

Book via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cherry-garden-branch-map-assessment-tickets-249111769007?aff=erelexpmlt>



These **SEN Toolkit** sessions provides a tool kit of ideas that may benefit pupils who have additional needs. It will include a variety of communication strategies and techniques. Videos will be used to illustrate how to use them within your setting.

(Please attend both sessions)

17th and 31st March 4:30pm-5:30pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sen-toolkit-tickets-249120414867>

An introductory session on how to support the speech and language of all children in an inclusive classroom and provide attendees with useful strategies. She will also introduce the wide range of training courses that ELKLAN has to offer.

5th May 4:30pm-5:30pm

Book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/elklan-speech-and-language-session-tickets-255986250767>



The UK Teaching Assistant Hub invites Teaching Assistants committed to developing children's desire, delight, and engagement as readers to join our online OU/UKLA Reading Group. The group will be informal, friendly and supportive. We welcome teaching assistants and support staff to join us and commit to attending all four 2022 CPD sessions. We will be developing evidence-informed practice, widening our knowledge of children's literature and other texts, enriching our RfP pedagogy and documenting the impact on our children as readers.

24th February 4:30pm-5:30pm

21st April 4:30pm-5:30pm

9th June 4:30pm-5:30pm

7th July 4:30pm-5:30pm



Where: Online Teams Virtual Meeting

To register your interest please email: tahub@universityprimaryschool.org.uk

Collaboration is key to success of this network, and we would like to thank both Aimee Durning and Abi Joachim for their support. They are both inspirational Teaching Assistants who have set up networks whilst being keen that more TA's benefit across the country. We know in FECOA we have many more inspirational TAs who we would love to be involved as TA champions. If you think this may be of interest to you then please make sure you join our first online meeting (date to be confirmed) or contact us Jayne.Robinson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The offers above have been kindly shared with us by University of Cambridge Primary School. We are particularly looking forward to joining the first 'Reading for Pleasure' group for TAs. The session will be online, informal and an opportunity to talk about children's books.

One Teaching Assistant's Professional Journey' by Aimee Durning

I have been a Teaching Assistant (TA) for nearly 15 years. My career started as a parent volunteer and then I was employed to work with a child in lower Key stage 2 as a one-to-one TA. I worked with this child until he left primary school. We had our ups and downs. Although I knew what his learning need was, I could not help but think he could do more and each day I came ready to be surprised. Throughout I had high expectations and an unwavering belief that he would and could succeed. It made me cross when data collection focused on those children on the cusp of achieving National standards rather than thinking about the success and learning journey for every child. One thing that I learnt whilst working alongside him was that relationships are everything in education and this was confirmed when I started working with leaders at the University of Cambridge Primary School. When we get the relationship right, the child flourishes. When we put humans at the heart of our work, we achieve humanity. When our hearts are filled with hope, we see new openings and possibilities. His successful story will stay with me always. We occasionally bump into one another and catch up on years' worth of family news. I leave, still believing in his success.

For the past six years I have worked and received an education in Teaching and Learning at the University of Cambridge Primary School. I have learnt so much during my time at UCPS. When the school first opened in 2015, the Head Teacher, Dr James Biddulph, handed me a copy of *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to Effective Interaction: How to maximise your practice*. I am an avid reader, so I devoured this book and then the other two accompanying titles. Fortunately, that same year I attended the training course in London and met Paula Bosanquet. I remember waltzing into Dr Biddulph's office with a proposal that we had to change the way we were working. He listened and said, 'go on then'...'yikes,' I thought as I realised, I was (for the first time in my career) given agency and ownership to make a difference not only to one child but to many children in a systematised way. This was just the very beginning of my professional research informed learning journey.

At the University of Cambridge Primary School, during 2018, we created an informal Teaching Assistant Network. This network involved after school CPD sessions. We had many different keynote speakers from many educational institutions. For example, Dame Alison Peacock and Dr Rob Webster. Our aim is to professionalise the profession and to raise the profile of the sterling work we do each day. Also, to offer much needed continued professional development to support and improve the outcomes of the children and their families. My work was recognised in 2019 when I was awarded Classroom Support Assistant of the Year at the annual TES Awards. If you wish to read more, please visit <https://www.tes.com/news/tes-awards-classroom-support-assistant-year>. All that I have achieved is possible because I am a valued part of the team, where I am treated as an educator. In our school, we refer to everyone in school as an educator and school leaders, of which I am one member, and do not differentiate between teacher and teaching assistants, except in so far as clearly defining the differing roles and responsibilities. This gives a culture of – we are all in it together for all children – and through this bring our own skills to the table. Fortunately, Teaching Assistants across the country have been recognised for their selfless contribution to education during this global pandemic. This work has been celebrated by the recent research carried out by UCL Institute for Education, Teaching assistants 'unsung heroes' of pandemic, study shows (Guardian, 2021). We each have played our part to educate children during very difficult times. Our work enabled vulnerable children to be in school during the last national lockdown and their parents to continue working. I am hoping that together, we can raise the profile of the valuable work we do because as Rob Webster has said 'we are the "mortar in the brickwork" holding schools together' (Webster, 2019).

References: Weale, S. (2019) £3.5bn education package not enough, say school leaders [Online] <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2019/sep/too-many-tas> (Accessed 6 April 2021) Weale, S. (2021) Teaching assistants 'Unsung Heroes' of pandemic [Online] <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/apr/01/teaching-assistants>