

Working With Other Adults – Top Tips

Communication

- Share the lesson objectives with the TA before the lesson – even better, make them aware of your medium term planning. It's a matter of moments for you but will have huge payback. If this hasn't been possible, make sure you provide a thumbnail sketch of the aims of the lesson and how you want to work together. Alternatively provide an easy-read planning overview so at a glance the other adult can see the programme for the week: what is happening in each lesson and what resources are required.
- Keep them in the loop. If your teaching partner is a TA, they may not be in the verbal or paper information loop. Make it your job to see they get the information they need.
- If you explain to the TA exactly what you would like them to be involved in, they will be able to become more involved in rewarding the pupils positively, giving praise and writing positive comments.
- If the TA is with you as general support, don't leave them dangling. Give them clear direction as to your own needs from them and what you would like them to concentrate on.
- Set up a regular meeting to share information. If this proves difficult due to the TA being part time, set up a brief written system using a whiteboard for messages, notes or diary entries.

Interaction

- Definite baseline expectations, ensure common understanding of routines/scripts, make clear the tasks classroom/learning situation.
- Having an additional adult in the classroom is a great resource – be sure to make the most of this by looking at different strategies for time management.
- Always model best practice. Having additional adults in the room could enable you to look at supporting different learning styles more effectively. Video your interaction, discuss with colleague, check out interactions/teaching in another class (peer observation), use teacher TV videos.
- Keep a professional dialogue throughout the teaching session and outside the classroom
- Use key phrases to organise the classroom dynamic e.g. re-focus the work of the other adult with specific student/group
- Use a clear, calm voice that's loud enough to be heard but not a 'teacher to a whole class' type of voice. Try and learn these starter sentences as a first attempt, then develop your own. Start each command by saying the adult's name. This gets their attention and avoids adults in the class room thinking that somebody else will do the work! "Fred, I wonder if you

- could..."; "Fred, If I show you what I want you to do...."; "Fred, if you try it like this you may find that...".
- Explore the range of strategies that TA's are happy to use and ensure that you support them in your class. Take the opportunity to learn from each other.

Reflection and professional dialogue

- Find the time and take the opportunity to periodically review the working relationship – it is helped if your school has a working contract to use as a framework for this.
- Show and celebrate the partnership – create/use opportunities for praise and appreciation.
- Remember that TA's often pick up on issues within the classroom before you do. Don't be threatened by this: use it to encourage them to keep you in the know. Equally, inform them of any sanctions you intend to put in place.
- Some TA's are attached to one pupil, which means that they get to know them extremely well. They will tell you what the warning signs are, and what strategies they have found to be most effective in dealing with problems.
- Spend time talking with TAs, doing joint planning and, equally, joint evaluation of lessons.

Mutual respect and support

- Never fail to reinforce your TA's presence as an adult to be respected by the class.
- If it's the first time a TA is in with you, introduce them to the class and reinforce their status. Subsequently, always include them in your talks with the class, ensuring the message is sent that "we" are here to help you.
- Respect and learn from each other's skills and use each other as a friendly critic.
- Use the strengths and develop those areas that need support, share and encourage each other's CPD.
- Create a meeting point on sharing evidence for Teaching and Learning. Extremely useful/powerful formative assessment material can be overlooked.
- Network. Buddy/Pair up with mentors and other teaching and associate staff.

Make it visible: the strength of a team

- Make it clear to the students that adults work as a team and have their individual strengths.

- Never undermine, offend or criticise in front of others – find the time and place.
- Always show mutual respect especially in front of others.
- Unless the other adult is there to manage behaviour explicitly, share the responsibility and use the organisational systems, eg senior leadership team member on duty, mentors, school behaviour policy. If the systems do not work, work with colleagues to improve them, get to see best practice
- If you find that the adult has tackled something incorrectly, or has an approach that you disagree with, address this as soon as possible. If it is sensitive ask them "for a quick word at the end of the lesson". Get it sorted out straight away through dialogue and discussion. Discuss with your NQT tutor more difficult sensitive issues and try out different strategies and review them at your NQT meetings.