# 

# Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together

# A Leaders’ Tool for Self-review

*Nāku to rourou  
nāu te rourou  
ka ora ai te ākonga.*

*With my basket and  
your basket the  
learner will thrive.*

Published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education.  
www.education.govt.nz

Copyright © Crown 2017  
All rights reserved. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

Contents

[Background 4](#_Toc473118542)

[How to use the tool 5](#_Toc473118543)

AREAS FOR SELF-REVIEW

[Roles in the classroom 7](#_Toc473118544)

[Planning by teachers and teacher aides 9](#_Toc473118545)

[Students’ learning and participation 11](#_Toc473118546)

[Teacher aide expertise and practice 13](#_Toc473118547)

[School leaders’ management of the teacher aide resource 15](#_Toc473118548)

[Professional development 17](#_Toc473118549)

[Next steps 19](#_Toc473118550)

[Helpful links for planning professional development 22](#_Toc473118551)

[References 24](#_Toc473118552)

This tool is for school leaders in New Zealand, including principals, other senior leaders and learning support coordinators (SENCOs). It is intended to grow leaders’ confidence and capability in applying the evidence about effective use of teacher aides.

Working through the tool will:

* give you a clear picture of where your school is at in providing the support that teacher aides need to be effective in their roles
* help you plan next steps to strengthen support for teacher aides and teacher aide practice in your school.

## Background

Teacher aides are a valued resource in most New Zealand schools. A growing body of evidence supports this view. It demonstrates that when schools have effective systems and processes for recruiting and supporting their support staff, their teacher aides can “have a positive impact on student confidence, behaviour, self-esteem, and motivation, and on teacher workload, job satisfaction and stress levels” (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Recent [research from the United Kingdom](http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research.php) describes the kinds of systems, processes, and practices that help schools make the best use of their teacher aides. It demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the teacher is always the leader of learning for all students in the classroom, including those who need additional support with their learning or well-being. It shows that inclusion for these students often means stepping back and giving them space to interact independently with the learning task and with their peers.

It is common in many schools for teacher aides to mainly work with students who need additional support with their learning or well-being. The research shows that this is not the best use of the valuable support that a teacher aide can provide. Although well-intentioned, more time with a teacher aide does not always lead to improved learning for students. Teacher aides need to add value to teachers, not replace them.

[Research](http://theconversation.com/the-best-ways-to-work-with-teaching-assistants-38120) also tells us that school leaders are pivotal in ensuring that teacher aides have the best possible impact on student learning. Becoming familiar with this evidence and reviewing practice in your school in light of it will help you take a systems approach to ensuring that teacher aides are effective in their roles.

The tool has been developed from three main sources, each of which draws on the above research:

* the United Kingdom’s [*Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants: A Self-assessment Guide*](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/TA_RAG_SelfAssessmentGuide.pdf)
* the modules in the Ministry of Education’s professional development resource [*Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together*](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz)
* the Inclusive Education guide [*Supporting Effective Teacher Aide Practice*](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/teacher-aide-practice)*.*

You and your team can use the tool to check where your school is at now and what the next steps might be for improving your school’s systems and processes for using teacher aides. It will help build your familiarity with the evidence and your confidence in applying it to make any necessary changes. Over time, it will help you ensure that you are making the best possible use of the valuable support that teacher aides can provide.

## How to use the tool

The tool is most effective when it is used to complement other initiatives in your school – for example:

* Planned actions resulting from your self-review can be included in your school’s strategic or annual plan.
* The tool can be used within an inquiry cycle in your school or community of learning – for example, at the start as part of establishing a picture of how you are doing and towards the end to evaluate the impact of actions you have taken.
* If your school has used (or is planning to use) the [Inclusive Practices tools](http://www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz/about-inclusive-practices-tools), reviewing your use of teacher aides will provide valuable, in-depth additional information to refer to as you work through the tools.

To begin with, bring together a group of about three people from your school to lead the review. The group should include at least one school leader (for example, the principal, the learning support coordinator, a syndicate leader, or head of department), a teacher, and a teacher aide. It could also include people representing other perspectives (for example, students, families, and whānau). The group should work through the following steps:

**1. Agreeing on a process and deciding on roles**

Decide who will take responsibility for leading the review, and decide how the group might gather the views of staff, students, families, and whānau.

**2. Gathering evidence**

To get the best out of the tool and the review process, you’ll need to engage with others in your school community.

* Discuss specific areas of the tool (for example, ‘Planning by teachers and teacher aides’) with a small number of representative teachers and teacher aides, to ensure you have an accurate picture of what is happening in classrooms.
* Talk to students about their experiences with teacher aides. This will help you to complete the ‘Students’ learning and participation’ area of the tool. For young children and some students with additional needs, an interview or group discussion may not be the best way to gather their perspectives. You may need to talk to their families and whānau or find a different way for them to share their experiences and preferences (for example, drawing a picture).
* Similarly, use a range of ways to gather the perspectives of families and whānau. As you do so, be mindful that their preferences may not align with the evidence about effective use of teacher aide support. For example, some parents may consider it ideal for a teacher aide to be permanently assigned to their child, despite research indicating that this can be counterproductive.
* When consulting with specialists and RTLBs, safeguard their trusting relationships with staff by focusing on general practice across the school and avoiding specific discussion of individuals.

Make your review manageable by taking advantage of the opportunities you already have in place for gathering evidence. These might include student focus groups, three-way conferences, and artefacts (for example, records of plans, observations, and communication with parents).

**3. Making judgments within the tool**

The tool covers six areas. For each of the areas, there are indicators or statements describing practice across a continuum from ‘emerging’ to ‘developing’ to ‘consolidating’. As you work through each area, decide on a score for each row of indicators. Then tally your scores for each area and answer the questions in the box under the area.

The indicators are designed to help you make ‘best fit’ judgments about where your school fits, acknowledging that there will often be variation across the school. The five-point continuum enables you to take this into account. In some instances, you will be focusing on the quality of practice (how it is carried out) and in others, you will be thinking more about how often you see it.

**4. Deciding on next steps after using the tool**

When you have worked right through the tool, look through your results and complete the ‘Next steps’ section at the end. The questions there will help you to plan an inquiry into your school’s support for teacher aides and teacher aide practice. When noting down ideas for new learning, as well as addressing areas that need attention, take into account the strengths you have identified and the opportunities they provide to spread effective practice – and check out some of the links provided after the ‘Next steps’ section.

**5. Planning for a future review**

As you work to improve your school’s use of teacher aides, conducting another review at a later stage will help you see what progress has been made, especially in relation to areas that needed attention. Comparing the results with those from your initial review will provide information over time on progress.

## Roles in the classroom

|  | **EMERGING** |  | **DEVELOPING** |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher and teacher aide teamwork** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers and teacher aides require support to develop into effective teams. |  | Good teamwork is evident at times, but it varies according to the expertise of individual teachers and teacher aides. |  | Senior leaders and school-wide processes ensure that teachers and teacher aides work effectively as teams, with clear agreement on what they need to do to achieve lesson objectives. |
| **Role clarity** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| School-wide discussion is needed to bring together disparate views about the respective roles of teachers and teacher aides. |  | Most teachers and teacher aides have a reasonable understanding of their respective roles, often informed by discussions with their school’s learning support coordinator or a senior leader. |  | Senior leaders proactively ensure that teachers and teacher aides have a shared understanding of their respective roles and that these are clearly delineated in their job descriptions. |
| **Teacher aides’ sense of belonging in the class** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides are introduced to students with additional needs, but not always to the whole class. |  | Teachers welcome and introduce teacher aides to all students in the class. |  | Teachers always welcome and introduce teacher aides to all students in the class, discuss class culture and protocols with them, and ensure they are included in the classroom community. |
| **Responsibility for the learning of students with additional needs** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides routinely have a direct, informal teaching role with students with additional needs, regularly serving as the ‘primary educator’ for these students. |  | Some teachers work with students with additional needs and take overall responsibility for their learning. |  | All students’ learning needs are met first and foremost through high-quality teaching by teachers, who spend as much time working with students with additional needs as with others. |
| **Teacher aides’ support for teaching** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides work almost exclusively with students with additional needs. |  | Some teacher aides work with a wider range of students and support teaching in a range of situations. |  | In agreement with teachers, teacher aides work with a range of students and support teaching in a range of situations. |
| **Responsibility for supporting positive behaviour** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers set behaviour expectations but don’t communicate them to teacher aides, or tend to leave behaviour management of some students to teacher aides. |  | Teachers set behaviour expectations and sometimes instruct teacher aides on strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour and getting students back on task. |  | All teachers set behaviour expectations and agree with teacher aides on strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour and getting students back on task. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 6–13: Definitely needs attention 14–22: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 23–30: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our teachers, teacher aides, specialists, and RTLBs say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## Planning by teachers and teacher aides

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EMERGING** |  | **DEVELOPING** |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| **Understanding and use of teacher aides’ skills and knowledge** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers require opportunities to develop their understanding of teacher aides’ skills and knowledge and how they can incorporate this understanding into their day-to-day planning for what teacher aides will do. |  | Teachers have some understanding of teacher aides’ skills and knowledge; they need support to increase this understanding so they can use teacher aides to their full potential. |  | Teachers understand and make full use of teacher aides’ skills and knowledge, adding to them by explicitly modelling effective strategies to teacher aides. |
| **Joint planning by teachers and teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers have not been allocated planning time with teacher aides; communication is hence largely ad hoc and informal, taking place between lesson changeovers or before school. |  | Sometimes teachers and teacher aides have allocated time to plan and discuss lessons together. |  | Teachers and teacher aides have allocated time to plan and discuss lessons together. |
| **Teacher aides contributing to IEPs and CLPs (collaborative learning plans)** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| The school has not yet established processes to ensure teacher aides are able to contribute to IEPs and CLPs. |  | Some teachers arrange for teacher aides to contribute to IEPs and CLPs, but processes for this are ad hoc and dependent on individual teachers. |  | Processes are in place to ensure teacher aides have a voice in IEPs and CLPs, including when they are unable to attend meetings. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher aides’ understanding of lesson objectives and activities** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides often go into lessons ‘blind’ with little understanding of lesson objectives and activities. |  | Teacher aides gain a basic understanding from teachers of objectives and activities before lessons. |  | Teacher aides enter lessons with a clear understanding of the concepts and information being taught, intended learning outcomes, success criteria, and the specific learning needs of students they will work with. |
| **Systems for teachers and teacher aides to reflect together** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| The school has not yet established processes for teachers and teacher aides to discuss how things have gone. |  | Some teachers organise regular discussions with teacher aides on how things have gone, but processes for this are ad hoc and dependent on individual teachers. |  | Processes are in place to ensure that there is day-to-day communication between teachers and teacher aides on how things have gone and that the results are used in on-going planning. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 5–11: Definitely needs attention 12–18: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 19–25: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our teachers and teacher aides say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## Students’ learning and participation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EMERGING** |  | | **DEVELOPING** | |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| **Expectations of students** | **1** | | **2** | | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers and teacher aides need support to develop appropriate expectations of students with additional needs. | |  | | Some teachers and teacher aides have high expectations of students with additional needs. |  | Teachers and teacher aides have high expectations of students with additional needs. |
| **How well students can access whole-class teaching and peer interactions** | **1** | **2** | | **3** | | **4** | **5** |
| Students with additional needs have few opportunities to engage in learning with the rest of the class and interact with peers. |  | | Students with additional needs learn and interact with peers almost as much as other students. | |  | Support for individuals or groups with additional needs is structured so it encourages peer interactions and helps them access general classroom teaching and learning. |
| **Support and opportunities for students to work independently** | **1** | **2** | | **3** | | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers and teacher aides need support to understand the value of sometimes stepping back to allow students with additional needs to work independently and to complete their own work. |  | | Some teachers and teacher aides withhold support at appropriate times to allow students with additional needs to work independently. | |  | Teachers and teacher aides actively look for opportunities for students with additional needs to attempt parts of tasks independently and to experience a healthy mix of challenge and success. |
| **Respect for student dignity** | **1** | **2** | | **3** | | **4** | **5** |
| Further training is needed to help teacher aides provide additional support (e.g., with eating, lifting, moving around the school) in unobtrusive ways that respect each student’s privacy and dignity. |  | | Teacher aides usually provide additional support in unobtrusive ways that respect each student’s privacy and dignity. | |  | Teacher aides always provide additional support in unobtrusive ways that respect each student’s privacy and dignity and foster independence. |
| **Supporting social interactions** | **1** | **2** | | **3** | | **4** | **5** |
| Few teacher aides understand that supporting students’ social interactions is part of their role. |  | | Some teacher aides understand and use a few strategies for supporting social interactions between students. | |  | Teacher aides understand and use a range of strategies for supporting social interactions between students. |
| **Knowing students and valuing diversity** | **1** | | **2** | | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| A change in school culture is required for teachers and teacher aides to deepen their knowledge of their students and draw on their diverse cultures, languages, and identities in teaching and learning. | |  | | Some teachers and teacher aides know their students well and draw on their diverse cultures, languages, and identities in teaching and learning. |  | Teachers and teacher aides actively seek to get to know their students well; they ask students what they know and love to do and what support they require, they talk to families and whānau about students’ strengths and interests, and they draw on students’ diverse cultures, languages, and identities in teaching and learning. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 6–13: Definitely needs attention 14–22: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 23–30: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our students, families, and whānau say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## Teacher aide expertise and practice

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EMERGING** |  | **DEVELOPING** |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| **Teacher aides’ scaffolding** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides tend to focus on task completion and are yet to understand the concept of scaffolding intended learning. |  | Teacher aides’ interactions with students sometimes include appropriate scaffolding to support learning and understanding. |  | Teacher aides provide the right amount of scaffolding at the right time, consistently giving less support at first. |
| **Teacher aides’ questioning skills** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides ask mainly closed questions. |  | Teacher aides sometimes demonstrate the appropriate use of open-ended questions. |  | Teacher aides use open-ended questions strategically to ensure students are ‘making meaning’ for themselves. |
| **Teacher aides’ use of wait time** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Further training is required for teacher aides to learn about the importance of using ‘wait time’ effectively to allow students to process and respond to questions. |  | Teacher aides sometimes use ‘wait time’ effectively and are gradually learning to avoid supplying answers or clues too soon. |  | Teacher aides always use ‘wait time’ effectively to allow students to think and respond. |
| **Teacher aides’ positioning and movement in the classroom** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides tend to position themselves very near to students with additional learning needs; they need support to understand the importance of moving around the room and being available to all students. |  | Teacher aides sometimes move around the classroom but generally sit with students with additional needs. |  | In agreement with teachers, teacher aides regularly scan and rove around the room, listening in and looking for opportunities to support students’ engagement in their learning. |
| **Teacher aides’ knowledge and understanding** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Support is required for teacher aides to develop their subject knowledge and understanding of teaching strategies. |  | Teacher aides have some subject knowledge in key areas and basic understandings of important teaching strategies. |  | Teacher aides have appropriate subject knowledge and understandings of teaching strategies, which they apply effectively to support student learning. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 5–11: Definitely needs attention 12–18: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 19–25: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our students, families, whānau, teacher aides, and teachers say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## School leaders’ management of the teacher aide resource

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EMERGING** |  | **DEVELOPING** |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| **School leaders’ views of teacher aides’ roles** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| School leaders view teacher aides as extra support for students with additional needs; there are few processes and systems supporting their role. |  | School leaders view teacher aides as a support for teachers of students with additional needs and establish processes and systems supporting this view of their role. |  | School leaders view teacher aides as part of the total school system focused on student achievement and ensure there are processes and systems supporting this view of their role. |
| **Recruitment of teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Recruitment of teacher aides is ad hoc and unsystematic. |  | Recruitment of teacher aides is based on applicants’ knowledge, skills, and work experience. |  | Recruitment of teacher aides is based on their experience, on their knowledge of students’ cultures, on identified student needs, and on the school’s vision for inclusion. |
| **Induction of teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Induction of teacher aides is ad hoc and reliant on the initiative of individual teachers. |  | Induction of teacher aides is coordinated by a senior leader and covers the key basic knowledge required for the position. |  | There is a documented process for inducting new teacher aides that includes coverage of communication channels, confidentiality protocols, and student health care and learning plans. |
| **Support for school-wide participation of teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Support is required to ensure teacher aides are informed, active members of the school community with access to administrative support and systems. |  | Some teachers ensure the teacher aides they work with are informed, active members of the school community with access to administrative support and systems. |  | School leaders ensure teacher aides are informed, active members of the school community who have access to administrative support and systems, receive relevant communications, and participate appropriately in events such as IEP meetings and staff meetings. |
| **Gathering information about teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| School leaders gather little information about how teacher aides are used in the school and the impact of their practice. |  | School leaders gather information from staff about how teacher aides are used in the school and the impact of their practice. |  | School leaders gather information from a range of people in the school community to understand and monitor how teacher aides are used in the school and the impact of their practice; they use this information to improve the use of teacher aides. |
| **Performance appraisal for teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| There is no performance review process in place for teacher aides. |  | Performance appraisals happen for teacher aides, but they are irregular and based on generic competencies. |  | Teacher aides participate in regular performance appraisals with a clear focus on supporting student learning and addressing their own professional learning needs. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 6–13: Definitely needs attention 14–22: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 23–30: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our teacher aides, school leaders, and RTLBs** **say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## Professional development

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EMERGING** |  | **DEVELOPING** |  | **CONSOLIDATING** |
| **Professional development for teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teacher aides have few if any opportunities to participate in professional development. |  | Teacher aides receive some professional development, but it is patchy and generic. |  | Planned professional development ensures teacher aides are fully equipped to support student learning across the achievement range. |
| **Examining beliefs and assumptions about diversity and disability** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Professional development and performance appraisals do not approach beliefs and assumptions about diversity anddisability and how these may affect teachers’ and teacher aides’ ways of working. |  | Professional development and performance appraisals sometimes touch on beliefs and assumptions about diversity anddisability, but not in ways that impact on ways of working. |  | Professional development and performance appraisals support teachers and teacher aides to examine their beliefs and assumptions about diversity anddisability and, if necessary, to change their ways of working to promote inclusion. |
| **Ensuring confidentiality, professionalism, and safety** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| There is little discussion about confidentiality, professionalism, and safety in relation to working with students with additional needs; consequently, teachers and teacher aides rely on their own understandings. |  | Teachers and teacher aides discuss confidentiality, professionalism, and safety informally, arriving at reasonably sound shared understandings. |  | The school has established policies on confidentiality, professionalism, and safety and provides professional development to ensure teachers and teacher aides gain accurate shared understandings of them. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Professional development for teachers on working with teacher aides** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Teachers receive little or no professional development on how to work with teacher aides. |  | Teachers receive some professional development on working with teacher aides, but there are no opportunities to collaboratively review its implementation in practice. |  | Teachers receive on-going professional development on working with teacher aides, including opportunities to collaboratively examine their effectiveness in doing so. |

**Our score:**  [Guide: 4–9: Definitely needs attention 10–14: Doing OK, but there’s room for improvement 15–20: A strength in our school]

**How are we doing in this area?**

**What do our teacher aides and teachers say about how we are doing in this area?**

**What are our specific strengths in this area?**

**Are there particular aspects we need to work on?**

**If we were to improve these aspects, what might we see happening?**

**What specific actions could we take?**

**What barriers might we have to overcome?**

## Next steps

**LOOK THROUGH YOUR RESULTS FOR EACH OF THE SIX AREAS ABOVE.**

**USE THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE CAPTURED IN THE BOX BELOW EACH AREA TO PLAN AN INQUIRY INTO YOUR SCHOOL’S SUPPORT FOR TEACHER AIDES AND TEACHER AIDE PRACTICE.**

**USE THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO SUPPORT YOU AS YOUR WORK THROUGH YOUR INQUIRY.**

**Note:** Your school will have its own established inquiry processes. The questions below are built around the [spiral of inquiry](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Evidence-based-leadership/Data-gathering-and-analysis/The-spiral-of-inquiry) described by Timperley, Kaser, and Halbert (2014)

**1. Scanning: What’s going on for our students?**

What have we noticed from conducting our self-review about how our teacher aide practices are impacting on students?

How well do we know what is going on for our students? Did our review include a range of perspectives? Are there others we should consider?

How do our results complement what we have learned from using other data gathering tools such as the [Inclusive Practices Tools](http://www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz/about-inclusive-practices-tools)?

**2. Focusing: What will make the most difference?**

Which of the six areas do we most need to explore and make sense of for our context? Which aspects of practice are most important to consider? Are these different for different people in our school?

Which changes in teacher aide practice would make the most difference for our students?

What changes in teacher, school leader, and schoolwide capability are needed to support teacher aides to be more effective in their roles?

What are the strengths and opportunities we have identified? Where are the barriers? How does this impact on our priorities for action?

What additional evidence would help us decide upon our priorities? Consider, for example, formal and informal evidence from other self-review tools, student achievement information, community consultation processes, observations, and conversations.

**3. Developing a hunch: How is our professional practice contributing to our situation?**

What factors impact on the ability of teacher aides to give effective support to students?

How might we strengthen support for teacher aides and teacher aide practice in our school?

What assumptions are we making, and how could we check them?

How could we test our hunches?

Where are our areas of difficulty or challenge? How do we make sure we address them openly and respectfully?

**4. New learning: How will we learn more about what we need to do?** (See below for links to key New Zealand professional learning resources relating to teacher aides.)

In light of our focus, what new learning is needed to improve teacher aide practice at our school?

What will enable teacher aides, teachers, and leaders to engage in the learning?

Who will lead the learning, and how? When will it take place, and where? Will we work with other schools? Will we work with an external provider? What kinds of observations and practice analysis conversations do we need to plan for as part of the learning?

How will our leaders engage people in the learning, sustain the momentum, and keep themselves informed about what is happening?

**5. Taking action: As a result of our professional learning, what changes do we need to make to strengthen our support for teacher aides and teacher aide practice?**

What can we do differently to make *a real* difference to students? What changes do we want to see in teacher aide practice? What does this mean for teachers? For leaders?

What changes do we need to make in our school’s culture, policies, and practices? Do these changes reflect the actions we identified that we need to take during our self-review?

How will we communicate about these actions or changes to families and whānau?

How will the changes be resourced? How will we build in time for both practice and reflection?

How will we know we have changed practice as intended? How will we monitor the impact of the changes on students? What evidence will we collect?

**6. Checking: Have we made enough of a difference for our students?**

What has been the impact of our changes for students? For teacher aides? For the school?

Has there been enough of an impact to make a real difference for our students? How do we know?

What’s the best way to report the outcomes from our inquiry to the Board of Trustees?

When will we repeat our self-review to monitor our progress in supporting teacher aides and teacher aide practice? What changes might we find in our areas of focus? Will there be any unintended changes? How might change in one area affect how we’re doing in another area?

## Helpful links for planning professional development

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together modules*** | ***Supporting Effective Teacher Aide Practice guide*** | ***Video examples of strong practice*** |
| **Roles in the classroom** | [Teachers and teacher aides: Who does what?](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-roles/Module-1)  [Supporting student learning in the whole class](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Supporting-student-learning/Module-10) | [Reflecting on leadership in the classroom and TA workflow](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5971)  [Building foundations for effective partnerships with TAs](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5943) | [Working in partnership to support student learning](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159141815)  [Collaboration and partnership between teachers and support staff](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138435) |
| **Planning by teachers and teacher aides** | [Students participating in their Individual Education Plan (IEP)](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-students/Module-6)  [Understanding the New Zealand Curriculum](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-work-together/Module-7) | [Planning and reviewing lessons and feedback on student learning](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5978)  [Involving TAs in observations and feedback to inform planning](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5984) | [Using modelling to support consistent teaching approaches](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159143471)  [Planning and supporting effective ways of working](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138436) |
| **Students’ learning and participation** | [Identifying students’ strengths](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-students/Module-5)  [Fostering peer relationships](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-work-together/Module-8) | [Asking students how they want to be supported by a teacher aide](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5997)  [Supporting student independence and ownership of learning](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/6001-6036)  [Supporting student interactions and friendships](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/6001-6049) | [Using classroom layout and support staff strategies to support a student’s learning and peer interaction](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138442)  [Ways to support peer interaction](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138431) |
| **Teacher aide expertise and practice** | [Supporting students with complex needs](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-roles/Module-3)  [Creating inclusive classrooms](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-work-together/Module-9)  [Teacher aide interaction that supports student learning](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Supporting-student-learning/Module-11) | [Understanding scaffolded support](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/6001-6019)  [Developing effective interactions with students](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/6001-6003)  [Supporting group work and collaborative learning](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/6001-6024) | [Support staff: Roving, scanning, supporting attention, asking open questions](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159137924)  [The valued role of support staff in an inclusive school](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159137926) |
| **School leaders’ management of the teacher aide resource** |  | [Understanding current teacher aide roles and responsibilities](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5826-5865)  [Recruiting staff who can support your school vision and values](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5885-5887)  [Developing a programme of induction for new teacher aides](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5885-5898) | [Valuing support staff in an inclusive school](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138184)  [Recruiting to support transitions and child-centred learning](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138181)  [Approaches to recruitment](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159137810) |
| **Professional development** | [Keeping our work professional, confidential and safe](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-roles/Module-2)  [What do we think about disability and diversity?](http://teachersandteacheraides.tki.org.nz/Our-students/Module-4) | [Providing teacher aides with flexible ongoing professional learning](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5885-5926)  [Outlining how teachers can build TA skills in specific approaches](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/shared/teach-aide/5941-5992) | [Meeting the learning needs of support staff](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159137822)  [Building support staff knowledge: modelling](https://vimeo.com/album/3852400/video/159138453) |

## References

Ministry of Education (2014). *Teachers and Teachers’ Aides Working Together.* Updated 2016. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Accessed July–September 2016 at http://teachersandteachersaides.tki.org.nz.

Ministry of Education (2016). *Guide: Supporting Effective Teacher Aide Practice.* Wellington: Ministry of Education. Accessed July–September 2016 at http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/teacher-aide-practice.

Ministry of Education (2016). *Teacher Aides: Draft Policy Position Paper*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Sharples, J. & Webster, R. (2015). *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants: A Self-assessment Guide*. United Kingdom: Education Endowment Foundation. Updated 2 February 2016. Accessed 23 August 2016 at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/TA\_RAG\_SelfAssessmentGuide.pdf.

Sharples, J., Webster, R., & Blatchford, P. (2015). *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants, Guidance Report*. United Kingdom: Education Endowment Foundation. Accessed 23 August 2016 at https://pivotaleducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/kr1-ta-guideportrait.pdf.

Webster, R (2015). *The Best Ways to Work with Teaching Assistants.* Accessed 23 August 2016 at http://theconversation.com/the-best-ways-to-work-with-teaching-assistants-38120.