

## Teaching Assistants' Perspectives on their Training and Professional Development in Primary Schools.

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**Abstract:** The training and development of school support staff is an essential component of the UK (England) government's Schools' Workforce Reform. This reform aims to raise pupil achievement and wellbeing through the training of 14,000 teaching assistants as Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) through undertaking government accredited HLTA training programmes in 2005/6. Where teaching assistants once helped with routine tasks such as washing paint pots and putting up displays, they are now involved in providing direct pedagogical support for the pupils in their care. The significant growth in support staff and the development of new training programmes makes this a key moment in time to research this area. Reform of the teaching assistant role has not been without controversy among both school support staff and practising teachers and this informs the context of debate and concern about outcomes for pupils, teachers and support staff, in which the research takes place. Using a methodological approach based on evaluation research, the paper reports on 17 teaching assistants working in primary and secondary schools who successfully completed the Phase 1 accredited HLTA training programme. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence. It explores the views of the teaching assistants on the training and the match to their changing role in classroom support. It identifies issues emerging in relation to the Schools' Workforce Reform for both school support staff and practising teachers. Outcomes from the research suggest that the training showed definite gains for teaching assistants in terms of knowledge and understanding; however, it also revealed a narrowing of the overall teaching assistant role, reducing it in some cases to providing cover for absent teachers. The impact of support staff upon pupil performance and teaching quality has not yet been fully investigated and this paper begins, in a small way, to address this issue.

**Keywords:** teaching assistant; support staff; primary school; secondary school; accredited training.

### 1.0 Introduction

This paper reports on teaching assistants' perceptions of the HLTA training programme, the match to their changing role in classroom support, and suggests resulting issues for the design and delivery of HLTA training programmes. It explores what impact undertaking the training and gaining HLTA professional status has had upon the school activities undertaken by the teaching assistants and their relationships with other members of staff within the school. Finally, it suggests emerging issues for the involvement of staff with HLTA professional status in classrooms in the context of the Schools' Workforce Reform

The 17 teaching assistants in the sample were from a cohort of 42 who successfully completed the Teacher Training Agency for Schools<sup>1</sup> (now TDA) accredited Phase 1 Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) training programme delivered by The University of Northampton in 2005. This group were self-selected on the basis of submitting completed questionnaires six months after gaining HLTA status. The group comprised ten primary and seven secondary teaching assistants. The most common length of employment as a teaching assistant was between two to five years (52.9%) and five (29.4%) teaching assistants had been in the role for more than eight years. Eleven (64.7%) teaching assistants had GCSE and/or NVQ qualifications, three had A levels (17.6%) and three (17.6%) had undertaken higher education level study.

## 2.0 Context

School support staff lie at the heart of the UK (England) government's radical plans for a modernised, remodelled workforce *'to find new ways, for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, of helping schools to realise the potential for all our children'* (ATL et al 2003, para 1). In the UK, Slater and Dean (2001) reported that there were 95,000 teaching assistants working in English schools and since 2003 more than 16,700 full-time equivalent additional support staff have been recruited (WAMG 2004). This significant growth is set to increase rapidly with the stated aim of developing training and assessment capacity for more than 14,000 teaching support staff in 2005-06 (TTA 2005a). This is in line with the declared government aim to have in place a strategic plan for support staff training and development that would lead to *'a strong confident and competent workforce focused on increasing pupil's achievement'* (ibid).

This focus on the professional training needs of support staff for those involved in learning and teaching activities in schools is mirrored in the US approach to Title 1 teacher aide qualifications requirements (US Bureau of Statistics 2004) and therefore has significant international parallels. In Europe, for example, Moran and Abbott (2002) report on the vital part played by teaching assistants in developing inclusive practices in schools in Northern Ireland, while Didaskalou (2002) argues that policy maker's reforms in Greek primary schools need to consider ways in which parents and teachers can work in partnership to support children with special behavioural needs. It could be argued therefore, that where countries such as Greece, have followed school based reform and innovation of other European countries, and particularly the UK, then those policies, if they are to be effective, should also include workforce reform in terms of additional adult support in primary school classrooms through the provision of assistants who can support teachers in a variety of ways.

The UK (England) government policy to increase and provide higher level support in schools (ATL et al, 2003) has formalised the shift in the role of the teaching assistant from someone who helps with the classroom 'housekeeping' such as putting up displays and washing pots, to that of providing direct pedagogical support to the teacher (Edmond, 2003). Training for teaching assistants has also undergone radical change. A National Workforce Agreement is being implemented which identifies a new professional status of Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTAs) with a remit to *'make a substantial contribution to the teaching*

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<sup>1</sup> Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is a government agency responsible for training and development of the Schools' workforce in England, UK

*and learning process in schools and raising standards of achievement by pupils*' (ATL et al 2003, para 11). The Agreement gives support staff access to training, development and career opportunities as professionals in their own right (WAMG 2004) and for HLTAs, there are national professional standards derived from the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (TTA 2003a). The professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants comprise of thirty-one statements grouped under the headings of '*professional values and practice*', '*knowledge and understanding*' and '*teaching and learning activities*'. The standards define what is expected of those teaching assistants who undertake the HLTA role.

The reforms have not been without controversy, specifically the expectation within the HLTA Professional standards that teaching assistants who held the new professional status would be able to '*advance pupils' learning in a range of classroom settings, including working with individuals, small groups and whole classes where the assigned teacher is not present*' (Standard 3.3.5, TTA 2003a). The National Union of Teachers (NUT) stated: '*The Government has removed the entitlement that pupils must be taught by qualified teachers only.*

*The NUT believes that, today and tomorrow, your child deserves to be taught by a properly trained graduate - a qualified teacher with support from properly paid assistants on permanent contracts changing role and status for teaching assistants as part of the Schools Workforce*' (NUT, 2003, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>)

The foundation degree, with its work-based training requirements, has emerged, in England, as most popular with those employed in education learning support roles (QAA 2005). However, the foundation degree as an academic award does not carry a professional status for teaching assistants and, in 2003, the Training and Development Agency for Schools accredited a small number of providers to deliver pilot HLTA programmes leading to the HLTA professional status. Subsequently, the TDA introduced Phase 1 and Phase 2 HLTA training and assessment programmes to begin in 2004 and 2006 (TTA 2003b, TDA 2005c).

The framework for the full training route, set by the Teacher Training Agency (now TDA), specified fifty days training with provider-based, school-based and information and communication technologies (ICT)-based e-learning components; and an alignment of training to professional standards (TTA 2003a, TTA 2003b). The role of professional standards as a key driver in professional development design is an acknowledged feature of initial teacher training programmes (Whitty and Wilmott 1995; Moon and Shelton Mayes 1995; Shelton Mayes 2001). The requirement of a school-based dimension alongside provider-based training similarly has roots in models of teacher professional development, including learning as knowledge to be acquired and applied in context, situated learning and apprenticeship (Maynard and Furlong 1993; Edwards, 1998; Lave and Wenger 1991; Craft 1996; Blandford 2000; Butcher 2000).

The Phase 1 HLTA training programmes, operated during 2004 and 2005, were the first training programmes developed specifically to support the development of teaching assistants to demonstrate the HLTA professional standards. This therefore represents a key moment to explore the views of teaching assistants who successfully completed the first HLTA training and development programme in 2005 to gain the HLTA professional status and consider any emerging issues in relation to the government's strategic plan for Schools' Workforce Reform.

### **3.0 Phase 1 TDA accredited HLTA training and Assessment Programmes**

Teaching Assistants accessed the Phase 1 HLTA training and assessment programmes by applying to their local education authority and undertaking an individual needs assessment, which considered how their current knowledge, skills and experiences gained from their support role in schools matched to the thirty-one professional HLTA standards. Local education authorities received government funding to support the needs assessment process and to fund the subsequent training and assessment offered by TDA accredited HLTA providers. The outcome of the needs assessment could lead to an assessment-only route or to training and assessment.

The vast majority of teaching assistants in Phase 1 were assessed as ready for the assessment-only HLTA route, for example 42 teaching assistants undertook the University of Northampton's 50 day training compared with 400 who followed the assessment-only route. The assessment-only route required candidates to attend a three day preparation course in which the evidence required for assessment against the standards was discussed and candidates were briefed on the formal assessment tasks and school visit. The preparation course was then followed by the formal assessment of candidate tasks and a school visit carried out by an HLTA assessor.

Teaching assistants who were assessed as requiring additional training were funded to attend an accredited TDA 50-day HLTA training programme. All accredited providers programmes followed the TDA framework of 20 days provider-based training, 20 days school-based activities and 10 days information and communication technologies activities. Appendix 1 shows the indicative training programme developed by The University of Northampton, which integrated all three framework elements – provider-school-ICT - and sets out the explicit alignment to the HLTA professional standards that the TDA required.

All Phase 1 HLTA training, preparation and assessment routes were externally evaluated by the TDA (TTA 2005b).

### **4.0 Methods**

The methodological approach adopted in this paper is that of evaluation research, which is concerned with the evaluation of social and organisational programmes or interventions (Bryman, 2001). In this evaluative research, we will be exploring whether the training of the teaching assistants through the HLTA training programme has achieved its goal as well as reporting on the perception of the HLTAs. Such an approach has been linked with the principles of experimental research design; however more recently, approaches to evaluation based on qualitative research have emerged. While there may be differences of opinion about how qualitative research should be carried out there is agreement that an in-depth understanding of the context and the diverse views of the participants are key features of evaluation research (Greene, 1994, 2000).

The research methods utilised are based on questionnaire and in-depth interviews with the teaching assistants. Through the use of these methods we hope to gain a clear view of the perceptions of the teaching assistants and the impact on workforce reform in their schools. Specifically the voices of the teaching assistants who are viewed as major players in the drive to raise standards in schools provide the core evaluation of the benefits, issues and overall quality of this pilot training and development programme (Burgess, 1993; Berk & Rossi 1990)

In setting up this study, we draw on the principles of critical realism, as advocated by Pawson and Tilley (1997) in that the outcome of the intervention (the changed activity of the teaching assistants) is seen as a result of generative mechanisms (the HLTA training programme) and the contexts of those mechanisms (the schools). As an area of research that draws on an intervention set in place by government policy, it has strong ecological validity as it is not an artificial intervention in the working lives of these teaching assistants but rather one that they themselves have chosen to undertake. This evaluation research, of course, has weaknesses in that the sample is small, but we consider it to be sufficient to identify trends and strengths and weaknesses within the HLTA training programme and the direction of the impact on workforce reform. Issues of validity in our research are addressed through the depth, richness and scope achieved through the interviews with the teaching assistants and the extent of the triangulation of data. The research draws on a number of other sources of evidence for triangulation including an external evaluation of The University of Northampton's HLTA training programme commissioned by the TDA. (TTA, 2005b) which reported on the programme; and the in-course student feedback processes.

### **5.0 Results: Teaching assistants' views on the HLTA training programme**

The teaching assistants reported favourably on the HLTA training programme (Table 1). Overall 88.2% of the teaching assistants felt the training had supported their professional development needs and had improved their professional knowledge and skills. 35.3% of teaching assistants reported a very high level of development. A similar response was noted in the end-of-course candidate evaluations where 100% of the 42 candidates in the cohort responded that the training had met the intended learning outcomes and 34.7% returned the highest ratings.

Nearly half of all teaching assistants (47.1%) commented on their increased confidence and their greater depth of knowledge and understanding. The ability to present well balanced lessons and understand lesson outcomes were also noted as key improvements. This aligns strongly with the teaching assistants views on how well the training supported the development of specific HLTA standards (see Table 4) in which the highest ranking standards include '*work with individual, groups and whole classes where teacher absent*' and '*understanding aims, content, teaching strategies and intended learning outcomes*'.

The following comments were typical of those reporting a positive impact on confidence and professional understanding

*'Advanced understanding of teaching and how children respond to different teaching methods.'*

*'I have personally gained the knowledge needed to cover the standards needed in teaching.'*

*'The training gave me more confidence, made me recognise my strengths and showed me ways to address any weaknesses.'*

*'Confidence in ability to encourage children to learn. The responsibility of having children's learning in your hands.'*

There is one set of HLTA professional standards for teaching assistants although there are many varied support roles and responsibilities. In this sample (see Table 5), there were

teaching assistants who worked in early years and primary (deemed primary), middle and secondary (deemed secondary) and who covered a broad range of support activities ranging from special educational needs and individual support, literacy and numeracy group support, behavioural support, and whole class support. This mirrors the single set of professional standards for teachers (TTA 2001) for all phases and subjects. However, unlike initial teacher training where the majority of training is specialised depending on phase and subject, the HLTA training brings together all teaching assistants for a common programme. Generally, the broad nature of the HLTA programme was valued:

*'I really enjoyed the training. I found it really useful and informative and opened my eyes to issues that I had not thought about before'*

*'It helped me to understand better why some children behave as they do and how to help better in certain circumstances'*

However, negative responses, in relation to the overall programme, were given by two of the secondary teaching assistants as they considered the training lacked focus on secondary schools. On further investigation it emerged that both had highly specialised roles in their respective schools and it seems likely that the training in focusing on the HLTA standards did not meet their specific needs.

*'It was very good for learning about school/educational jargon and procedures. It lacked greatly in focus on secondary and the very different role a cover tutor has opposed to a TA'*

The features of the overall training programme that teaching assistants identified as most useful in helping them meet the HLTA professional standards were the tutor input, including the provision of specialist tutors, such as those with expertise in behaviour management and special educational needs in relation to specific HLTA standards. Opportunities to discuss with other teaching assistants, support for planning lessons, special education needs, behaviour management and the clarification of the HLTA standards were also identified as positive features.

*'The tutors were very professional. The modules were all very relevant. Working in groups – talking with other TAs was very beneficial. The school based tasks were useful for finding out more about the 'overall picture' – policies, curriculum maps etc.'*

*'Some of the tutors were willing to 'tailor' some of the sessions to meet the group's needs which was excellent and so helpful.'*

*'Tutors being specific to a certain area'.*

*'When the teacher explained about an experience they had known about and how the standards would fit in'*

35.3% of teaching assistants reported no negative aspects of the training programme. Those aspects of the overall training programme that teaching assistants did not find useful in meeting the HLTA professional standards focused on the training to develop information and communication technologies (ICT). Again this aligns strongly with teaching assistants' views on how well the training supported specific HLTA standards where *'know how to use*

*ICT for pupils and own benefit*’ was ranked bottom (Table 4). The ICT component of the training was reported as being too basic to match the level of teaching assistant expertise. Opportunities for e-learning also received mixed support from teaching assistants.

*‘I found the two computer days of no help to me. I had already done a number of evening classes in various computer courses and have my ECDL. I felt at times I knew how the programme we were using worked better than the tutor did.’*

*‘Electronic support – home computer for producing work and internet access for research. It would have been much more helpful, however, to have had access to the university student website.’*

*‘I didn’t need electronic support but other people found it helpful’*

The support provided by the tutor/trainers and their peer group were rated most highly by the teaching assistants (see Table 2). The support provided by a mentor in the school setting was ranked fourth and teaching assistant comments on the role of school-based staff in this programme were mixed.

*‘I was very lucky that my class teacher was my mentor and was very supportive.’*

*‘Mentor at school was unaware of the HLTA standards until I went through them with him myself.’*

This is not surprising given the relative ‘newness’ of the HLTA professional standards, status and role. A further issue is that the TDA accredited programme specification does not identify mentor support but does require school-based tasks.

Teaching assistants found the training most useful in supporting the development of the HLTA standards relating to *professional values* and *knowledge and understanding* (see Table 3). The rank order (see Table 4) of the professional standards<sup>2</sup> identifies two strong responses in relation to the highest (whole class teaching) and the lowest (ICT) ranking responses. The professional standard that teaching assistants report as most usefully supported through the training appears to relate to the teaching assistants change in role i.e. taking whole classes (see 6.2 below).

With exception of some negative responses in relation to overall usefulness of training, discussed above, no major difference of views emerged for secondary and primary teaching assistants undertaking the training.

### **5.1 Teaching Assistants’ perspectives on impact of HLTA status**

Overall the teaching assistant range of roles and activities had in general become narrower since gaining HLTA status. Prior to undertaking HLTA training, only two (11.8%) teaching assistants, both secondary, had reported that their role included teaching classes.

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<sup>2</sup> Three of the thirty one professional standards relating to numeracy and literacy national qualifications, guiding the work of other adults and improving practice through observation were not surveyed.

After HLTA training, 14 (82.4%) teaching assistants reported teaching whole classes, including cover for absent teachers, taking subject classes and taking classes to allow teachers PPA time (planning, preparation & assessment). For the majority this now formed the major part of their work activity.

*'I work in 3 classes – Reception, Y1/2, and Y3/4 four afternoons per week. I plan, deliver, resource and assess the lessons (under the supervision of the teacher). My mornings remain as before.'*

*'PPA time equating to four afternoons per week. Covering: Year 1 Art and Music. Year 1 / 2 History, DT, Geography. Year 2 Art and Music. Year 3 History, Geography. SEN Programme withdrawal of individual pupils and groups.'*

*'Planning and running of catch-up classes in English and other subjects. Working more with teachers – planning and covering lessons. Cover work for pre-planned absences.'*

Four (23.5%) teaching assistants reported no change in their role or activities following gaining the HLTA status. The teaching assistants concerned expressed major disappointment and frustration where no change had resulted.

## **5.2 Teaching assistants' perceptions of other staff attitudes**

Generally, teaching assistants report that there have been significant changes in the way they are perceived by teachers, head teachers and other teaching assistants within their schools but not by parents or pupils (see Table 6).

They report an overall positive impact on teacher and Head teacher attitudes.

*'Trusted more.'*

*'Teachers are more confident in my ability to teach their classes. My opinion is more frequently asked for.'*

*'Teachers look at me as a skilled person.'*

*'The Head teacher speaks on more confidential issues regarding pupils'*

*'I have much more contact with the Head teacher. I have asked to take on a liaison role between Senior Management Team and Teaching Assistants'*

*'There is higher expectation of me as a member of staff'*

However, they report mixed responses from other teaching assistants, with the majority reporting a negative impact.

*'Caused a rift-a lot of TAs resent the fact I have HLTA status.'*

*'The response has not been positive at all – It has caused various ructions at the school.'*

*‘They feel that there are several duties that I do that they could not be confident or happy to undertake. Most of them will come to me to discuss problems they are having to ask for advice.’*

*‘Other TAs at my school were not interested in gaining HLTA status and consequently know very little about the role.’*

Parents and pupils were generally unaware of any change except for ‘teaching classes’ where the response has been positive.

Only 47.1% of teaching assistants reported an intention to go on to further professional development. No particular pattern of further professional development emerged for those who were keen to continue with degree completion. Some individuals noted the possibility of undertaking a foundation degree and progression to teacher.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

The features discussed in this paper suggest that the teaching assistants valued the development of a theoretical and reflective underpinning to the range of skills developed through their work-based experiences. However, there may be a need for greater differentiation in the training in particular, between primary and secondary teaching assistants, and in relation to ICT development where the current expectations of teaching assistant ICT skills were set too low. There is some evidence that e-learning strategies might prove useful for HLTA training although the very positive impact of other teaching assistants and the tutor role in providing support suggest a ‘blended’ approach would provide the best model of training for this group. It is clear that some staff are undertaking the HLTA in the absence of other training for their specific school roles

The training programme analysed by our research, is highly regarded by the teaching assistants, particularly in terms of developing their knowledge and understanding and the role of the specialist tutor. The positive responses to the HLTA training programme align with the external evaluations carried out by the TDA (TTA 2005b) and in-course candidate feedback (UoN 2005).

Nationally, however, there has been a low take-up of the full training programme by teaching assistants compared to those who seek the shorter assessment-only route. The HLTA training has also been focused on generic standards. The government’s strategy for Schools’ Workforce Reform needs to be further extended to cover a variety of school roles and to include the range of specialist teaching assistants roles. A model of differentiated training to match personal training requirements in relation to the professional standards would better suit the needs of this group. This would also mirror the current initial teacher training model where different subject or phase specific training is linked to one generic set of professional standards for teaching.

This research also suggests that gaining HLTA status has narrowed the range of activities undertaken by individual TAs with a major shift to teaching whole classes as part of cover for absent teachers or PPA arrangements. This shift, if confirmed by our larger study, suggests that the emerging HLTA role is not in balance with the overall range of the HLTA professional standards nor the overall design of the HLTA training programmes. If the workforce reform agenda is to be achieved and have a real impact upon learning and teaching in schools then there needs to be a further re-conceptualisation of HLTA training that

embraces a new model of a school professional learning and teaching team. In its present form it is a lost opportunity to provide more personalised learning and help schools realise the potential for all children in schools.

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**Appendix 1 Extract from The University of Northampton's Phase 1 HLTA Training Programme**

<b>HLTA Standards</b>	<b>Centre Based to Face to Face Training (20 days)</b>	<b>School Based Training (20 days)</b>	<b>e-Learning (10 days)</b>
<b>1.4</b> <b>1.6</b>	Introduction to the course Meeting the Standards (12hrs) Developing a personal professional profile Self evaluation Reflective Practice. Experiential learning	Use the Record of Achievement profile related to HLTA standards and evaluate own practice with mentor (At commencement of training – 3hrs; and at end of training 3hrs)	Record data on an electronic version of a Record of Achievement document, save the document and email it as an attachment to the supervising tutor (3hrs).
<b>1.4,</b> <b>2.7</b> <b>3.1.1</b> <b>3.3.6</b>	<b>Collaborative Colleagues. (6hrs.)</b> Teaching Assistants roles and responsibilities Collaborating with colleagues Partnership teaching Effective teamwork Communication between professionals Managing the work of other adults	Identify one teacher colleague with whom it is possible to team teach Jointly plan and prepare a lesson and deliver it collaboratively. Evaluate the lesson and make recommendations for future practice (6hrs).	Use web or software resources to plan lessons. Where appropriate, use email to liaise with teacher colleagues (3hrs).
<b>2.2</b> <b>2.3</b> <b>2.7</b>	Planning for Teaching and Learning 1 (6hrs) The National Curriculum: Aims, Values & Purpose The NC Structure and content National strategies. The planning cycle: long & medium term planning The place of assessment in the planning cycle.	Investigate and note how the curriculum is organised in a specific educational setting. Investigate and note the process of curriculum planning in specialist area Identify/note age related expectations of pupils in specialist area. Identify and note how assessment is used to inform curriculum planning in specialist area. (9hrs)	Web search and locate lesson plans relevant to specialist area. Download relevant material and annotate it to show how it might be adapted to meet the needs of an identified group of pupils. E-mail/e-conference for support (6hrs)
	Planning for Teaching and Learning 2 (6hrs)	Using information acquired	Use the Internet to

<p>2.2 2.3 2.9 3.1.1 3.3.1</p>	<p>Planning lessons Writing learning objectives Scripting the lesson: effective beginnings, middles and ends Planning transitions Curriculum/pupil match Assessment</p>	<p>in the taught session and under the supervision of an experienced teacher, plan and resource a lesson within the specialist area (9hrs).</p>	<p>research subject knowledge relevant to the content of the lesson to be planned (3hrs).</p>
<p>2.2 2.3 3.1.1 3.1.3 3.3.1 3.3.3 3.3.5</p>	<p><b>Teaching and Learning 1 (6hrs)</b> Working with the whole class, groups and individual learners Adapting plans for different pupil needs Scaffolding the learner Differentiation</p>	<p>Use the planning from the previous week to prepare and to teach a whole class or group of pupils. Identify the learning that took place in the lesson. Evaluate the lesson and explain any necessary changes to be made. Demonstrate key areas of own learning. (12hrs)</p>	<p><b>E-conferencing</b> With other student colleagues using the Northampton Integrated Learning Environment (NILE) Explain the content and structure of lessons, Share evaluations of lessons, Offer advice where problems occur. (4hrs)</p>

**Appendix 2 Questionnaire Data**

**Table 1 How well did the training programme support teaching assistant professional development needs?**

(5 point scale)

Very well		OK		Not well
35.3% (6)	29.4% (5)	23.5% (4)	11.8% (2)	0

**Table 2 How useful were the following in helping teaching assistants meet the HLTA professional standards?**

(Rank Order 1= most useful)

	Rank Order
<b>TA/Peer support</b>	1
<b>Trainer/tutor support</b>	1
<b>HLTA materials</b>	3
<b>School/mentor support</b>	4
<b>Electronic support</b>	5

**Table 3 How well did the training programme support teaching assistants in developing specific areas of the HLTA professional standards?**

(Rank Order 1= most useful)

	Rank order
<b>Professional Values</b>	1
<b>Knowledge &amp; Understanding</b>	1
<b>Planning &amp; Expectations</b>	3
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	4
<b>Monitoring &amp; Assessment</b>	5

**Table 4** How well did the training programme support teaching assistants in meeting specific HLTA professional standards?

Responses to HLTA professional standards. Rank Order (1=Most Useful)

<b>HLTA Prof. Standard</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Rank order</b>
<b>Work with individuals, groups and whole classes where teacher absent</b>	3.3.5	1
<b>Use behaviour strategies to contribute to learning environment</b>	3.3.4	2
<b>Understand aims, content, teaching strategies and intended learning outcomes</b>	2.3	2
<b>Know legal definition of SEN, familiar with SEN code</b>	2.8	4
<b>Contribute to planning and preparation</b>	3.1.1	4
<b>Motivate pupils through teaching activities</b>	3.3.1	6
<b>High expectations of all pupils</b>	1.1	6
<b>Know strategies to establish good behaviour</b>	2.9	6
<b>Plan their own role in lessons</b>	3.1.2	6
<b>Aware of statutory frameworks</b>	2.7	6
<b>Contribute to planning in out-of-school activities</b>	3.1.4	11
<b>Communicate effectively with pupils</b>	3.3.2	11
<b>Understanding of specialist area to support pupils</b>	2.1	11
<b>Familiar with school curriculum</b>	2.2	11
<b>Promote inclusion of pupils</b>	3.3.3	15
<b>Work collaboratively with colleagues</b>	1.4	16
<b>Promote positive values, attitudes, and behaviour</b>	1.3	16
<b>Contribute to selection of resources</b>	3.1.3	16
<b>Successful relationships with pupils</b>	1.2	19
<b>Respond to equal opportunities issues</b>	3.3.7	20
<b>Monitor pupils response to learning tasks</b>	3.2.2	20
<b>Support pupil evaluation through assessment activities</b>	3.2.1	22
<b>Monitor pupil participation and give feedback to teachers &amp; pupils</b>	3.2.3	22
<b>Know key factors that affect pupil learning</b>	2.5	22
<b>Organise and manage safe learning, space and resources</b>	3.3.8	25
<b>Contribute to pupil progress records</b>	3.2.4	26
<b>Liaise with parent and carers</b>	1.5	27
<b>Know how to use ICT for pupils and own benefit</b>	2.4	28

**Table 5.** Change in teaching assistant role/responsibilities since gaining HLTA professional status.

	Whole class support	Individual pupil support	SEN support	Subject Specific support	Combination	Other
Before HLTA	41.2% (7)	76.5% (13)	52.9% (9)	29.3% (5)	47.1% (8)	17.6% (3)
After HLTA	64.7% (11)	64.7% (11)	64.7% (11)	58.8% (10)	41.2% (7)	11.8% (2)

**Table 6.** Has gaining HLTA changed the way teaching assistants are perceived by other?

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>TAs</b>	<b>Head teacher</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Parents</b>
Yes	64.7% (11)	52.9% (9)	64.7% (11)	29.4% (5)	23.5% (4)