be thAT
Teaching Assistant

assistive technologies
in mainstream classrooms

microlink®
education focused solutions

Developing the use of
Assistive Technologies
in mainstream classrooms

be thAT
teacher

assistive technologies
in mainstream classrooms

Recent government announcements have highlighted the need for sector-wide engagement in the use of Assistive Technologies and generative AI in education[1] (collectively described as EdTech), which is also reflected in new frameworks being proposed to inspect and grade schools[2].

As a development from Microlink's "Be ThAT Teacher" professional development programme, this course is designed to empower Teaching Assistants to effectively integrate Assistive Technologies (AT) into mainstream classrooms, as an integral component of "in-class support".

[1] Edtech: teachers to be trained in SEND tools | Tes

[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67927f1ebcd53eb4d9fad612/school_inspection_toolkit_draft_for_consultation.pdf

Design Principles

Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of AT, its benefits, and applications tailored to different levels of AT awareness and diverse school contexts.

The course emphasises quick wins using free or built-in AT tools and encourages hands-on experimentation with new features and apps.

Participants will conduct progress checks, share successes, and reflect on challenges.

Ultimately, Teaching Assistants will be able to support school communities to foster a more inclusive and accessible learning environment through effective AT use, impacting positively on the engagement and progress of cohorts of learners beyond those with targeted and bespoke provision.

The overall aims and objectives of Be ThAT TA are to help Teaching Assistants and SENCOs to:

1. **Enhance Awareness and Understanding of Assistive Technology (AT):** Equip participating staff with comprehensive knowledge of AT, its benefits, and applications in mainstream classrooms, tailored to different levels of AT awareness and school contexts.

2. **Identify and Implement Quick Wins with AT:** Discover and utilize free or built-in Assistive Technology tools, learning how to integrate them effectively into mainstream classroom settings to support diverse learner needs.

3. **Engage in Hands-On Practice with AT:** Encourage school staff to experiment with new Assistive Technology features or apps with students and colleagues, fostering a culture of innovation and practical application.

4. **Reflect on Progress and Share Successes:** Conduct progress checks to evaluate the impact of AT training, share successes, reflect on challenges, and provide feedback on initial experiences with AT implementation.

5. **Complete Case Studies:** Contribute to a growing catalogue of effective teaching and learning strategies and interventions using Assistive Technologies, in line with current government ambitions and intent.

Impact

"**He's not coming home with that Coke bottle effect.** He was having angry outbursts, crying and stomping and getting down on himself. That happens a lot less now. He's proud of his work and wants to talk about it now." – Parent
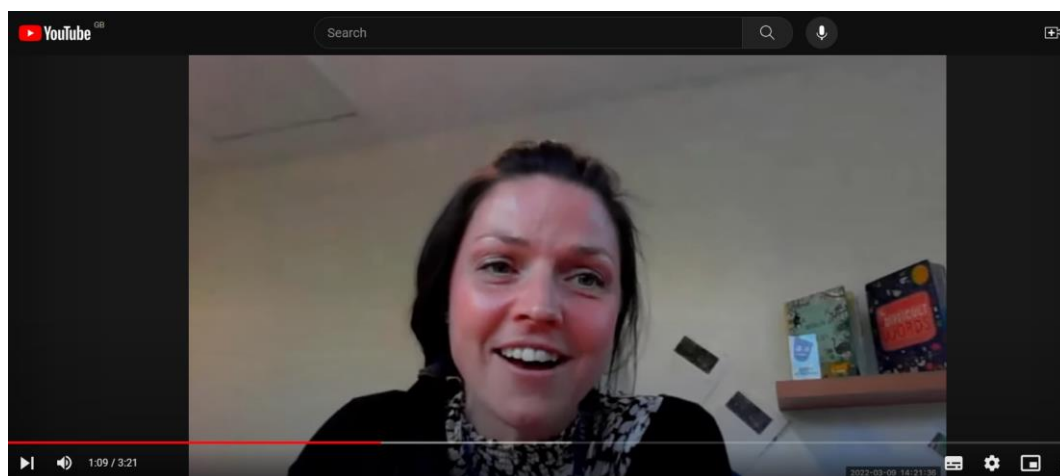
"**Thanks to this course, the life of one of my pupils has been transformed."** – Training Participant

"Since using the speech-to-text on the iPad his [Y1 child] whole mindset has changed. He says, '*I can do it and I'm going to do it*'. He really loves writing now." – Teaching Assistant

"We now have students accessing entry-level and functional skills, who couldn't access that without assistive technology, so they are actually **coming out with qualifications that they may not have been able to come out with previously**." – Training Participant

"Following the AT training course, participants reported **significant improvements in the independence** (92% and 78%) and **confidence** (89% and 78%) of **SEND** and **EAL** pupils respectively.

"Additionally, the **use of AT had positive impacts on the behaviour and engagement** of SEND pupils (86%) and EAL pupils (67%) in a majority of participating schools. It also had a **positive impact on the levels of attainment** of SEND pupils (64%) and EAL pupils (47%)." – DfE Independent Report 2024
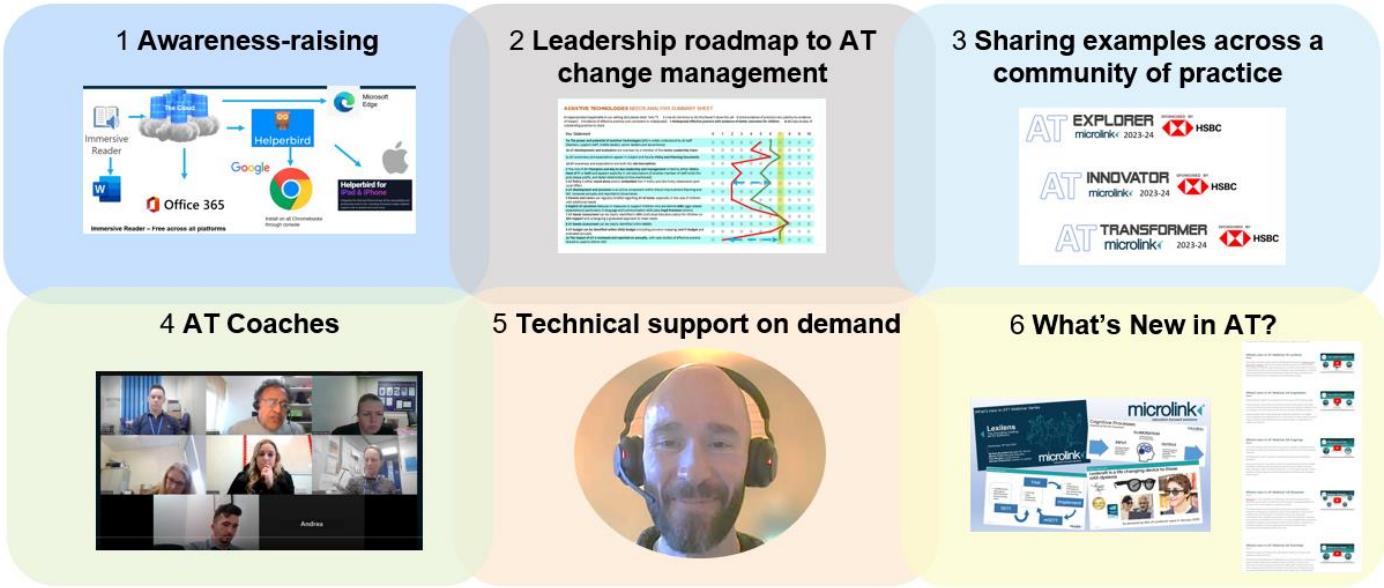

https://youtu.be/VXzJKX_pUHI

The response of a 9 yr-old boy with reading difficulties, frustrated because he was always slower than his peers, using text-to-speech for the first time:

"... oh my gosh it's reading it to me, this is amazing, this is the best thing ever, where can I get this, can I have it on my tablet at home..."

Be ThAT Teaching Assistant

Why is the programme so successful?

1 Awareness-raising

2 Leadership roadmap to AT change management

3 Sharing examples across a community of practice

4 AT Coaches

5 Technical support on demand

6 What's New in AT?

A two-hour PowerPoint Presentation will not change the world.

That is why our programme is built around **six essential elements** that combine to produce a powerful change lever, delivered over a three-to-four-month period:

- The entry point is built around the **free and readily available accessibility tools** built into Microsoft Office 365, such as Immersive Reader, and Google accessibility tools.

- We give substance to the concept of **Child-Centred Innovation**, growing acumen and experience in a stepwise manner

- We offer a comprehensive **leadership and management roadmap to change**, built around an effective Needs Analysis framework with supporting documentation

- We have a **team of AT Coaches** who work with clusters of schools over a period of three months to share ideas and problem-solve together

- We have **AT expertise available on demand** to help overcome unanticipated barriers

- Finally, we offer all the participating schools a line of sight to new and emerging **Assistive Technologies** that is more capable and more cost effective, helping schools to reduce the cost of inclusion, whilst ensuring greater impact

PEOPLE FOCUSED SOLUTIONS WHEN YOU NEED THEM

Be ThAT Teaching Assistant

Rewarding engagement

Teaching Assistants are encouraged to submit a short case study describing how Assistive Technologies have impacted positively on an individual child or group of children.

Case studies will be collated and shared across a community practice that will number hundreds of schools, designed to unleash creativity and child-centred solutions.

Any teacher completing the programme and contributing a case study or needs analysis will also get a CPD Certified Certificate for their efforts.

The training is built around three 90-minute online group coaching sessions, starting in **May 2025**, and is based on the high-impact programme for teaching staff and leaders.

Indicative price point to access the full programme, additional AT support sessions and CPD accreditation on submission of a case study will be just **£95** per participant.

If you would like more information please complete the Expression of Interest Form here:

https://www.microlinkpc.com/be-that-teaching-assistant/

Or contact our Education Dept:
education@microlinkpc.com   **or**   Marius.Frank@microlinkpc.com

We look forward to working with you.