

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS (Reflection on Experience and Learning)

Rationale and Introduction

The programme requires you to carry out weekly reflections on and evaluation of your experience, learning, practice and your professional development throughout the course. This enables you to develop as a 'reflective practitioner', to chart and monitor your progress and to set targets for your further development.

Your weekly reflections on your experience and learning (REAL) develops into a reflective log of your learning journey and help you attempt to explain significant experiences and events in your professional development and to use these to inform your future practice.

Your weekly reflections should make clear how you understand particular events in your training, your experiences and your learning, and your own impact on pupil learning and progress.

The Process

Weekly reflections should capture significant moments of your learning and should also be specifically related to the teaching standards, where appropriate, and throughout should consider your progress and impact on pupil learning. Although personal, they are used as a basis for professional discussion with mentors and tutors and must therefore observe professional expectations.

At first it is normal to note much of what happens to you during the programme in your weekly reflections. However, as the programme develops you will become more selective about the experiences you refer to including only those learning experiences that are most significant to your professional development.

Your weekly reflections must be **critical** and **analytical, explaining** events and experiences. They should be as long as they need to be for you to achieve this, though they should not be too long and definitely **not** overly descriptive (aim for 150 – 200 words per entry). Experience tells us writing two longer entries each week, rather than many smaller ones tends to be most effective.

Answering certain prompts and questions might help you in this process:

- What happened or what have you noticed? (brief description)
- How do you feel about it?
- What have you learned?
- *Analyse* why it is important to you, what you think it means, why you have come to this particular explanation and not another; whether there might there be an alternative explanation for the event or experience witnessed?
- How has your training impacted on what you have learned?
- How has or how might your practice and its impact on young people be enhanced or changed as a result of your analysis?
- What are the implications of your learning for your future professional development?

Events written about in your Weekly Reflections' log as a whole **should** include reference to your:

- School-based experience and training in **Placement Schools A and B** and other school and **transitional settings** e.g. observation of others, mentor training sessions, whole-school training, other school study.
- **University** sessions, learning and training.
- **Feedback on your practice** from, and discussion with, mentors, tutors and other teachers and how you have responded to this feedback and discussion.
- Evidence from the tracking and development of your **subject knowledge for teaching**.
- **Reading**, including school policies, published professional and academic articles and books, is an expected context of training and as such, should be used to inform experience and other training referred to in regular weekly reflections. (See Secondary Programmes Professional Practice Library list.)
- **Your teaching**, including its planning, preparation, students' assessed work and any collaborative work with experienced colleagues, and your lesson evaluations.

Look to critical incidents in school-based and university training, classrooms and schools that provide rich sources upon which to reflect. It will be important to consider what inspires you to reflect across a **range** of training and learning experiences and in particular look to critical incidents in your own classroom. **Do not focus exclusively on training and experience in school and the classroom.**

You should make your weekly reflections available to your mentor before and at each mentor session.

Please also note:

An e-version of the Weekly Reflections (REAL) log is easier to manage. You are asked to complete this log electronically.