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| Grad2Teach – NCFE Level 4 Teaching Fundamentals  Independent Learning Journal W2:  Reflections on your school research from the first 2 weeks |

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| Trainee Name: |  | Week Number: | 2 |
| Date: |  | Focus Topic: | ***Reflections on my school research from the first two weeks*** |

## Top Tips for Using This Journal

* Write in clear, short sentences.
* Keep paragraphing focused and remember your topic sentences (a sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph in which it occurs).
* Avoid jargon unless you explain it.
* Keep it confidential – no full student names.
* In academic writing, **reflection** is the process of deeply analysing past experiences, events, or ideas to understand what happened, why, and how it has impacted your learning and future actions. It involves moving beyond simple description to critically evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and implications, often using academic models or theories to provide structure and depth to your insights. This is a really important skill for teachers.
* Declare any use of ChatGPT/AI if you have used it to help you complete the task\* (\*You will need to complete the AI Use Declaration Form and upload it if you have)
* Remember to keep within the word count. This document should be **500-750 words**.

**Brief for this journal:**

* **From the people you have interviewed, what have you learned about the Senior Leadership Team’s, middle leaders’ and colleagues’ daily responsibilities required by working with children in an educational setting. You need to talk about at least one colleague from each of these three teams in your response (AO1/1.1).**
* **Be sure to include references to the placement school’s ethos and values (AO1/3.1)**

**Reminders:**

* **Gibbs Reflective Cycle needs to be used in your journals from Week 2 (we’ve helped you by using the Gibbs named stages and prompt questions below)**
* **You shouldn’t exceed the word limit for this IJL so be selective about the topic/s you write about – don’t try to include everything!**

## 1. Description – What happened?

Start with a factual recount of the experience/situation/moment

* What was the situation? What did you do?
* Who else was involved? Where and when did it happen?
* What was the outcome? Was it expected or surprising?

(Aim: focus on facts without analysis or judgment)

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## 2. Feelings – what were you thinking and feeling?

Reflect on your emotional and cognitive response.

* How did you feel at the time, before and after the event?
* What thoughts went through your mind?
* How did you emotions affect your behaviour?

(Aim: acknowledge both positive and negative feelings honestly)

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## 3. Evaluation: what was good and bad about the experience?

Assess the outcomes and your actions.

* What went well, and why?
* What didn’t go well?
* Were your goals achieved? Were learners engaged?

(Aim: be objective – celebrate your successes and recognise challenges)

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## 4. Analysis – what sense can you make of the situation?

Dig deeper into why things happened as they did.

* What helped or hindered the experience?
* Are there relevant teaching theories that apply?
* What patterns or learning needs emerged?

(Aim: connect experience to professional knowledge or theory)

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## 5. Conclusion – what else could you have done?

Summarise the key learning and consider alternatives.

* What would you repeat?
* What would you change or improve?
* What do you now understand better?

(Aim: identify what the experience taught you)

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## 6. Action plan – if it arose again, what would you do?

Plan for future improvement.

* How will you apply your learning?
* What specific steps will you take next time?
* Do you need training, support or resources?

(Aim: turn reflection into tangible, future-focused action)

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**Well done for completing your first Independent Learning Journal using Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle. We hope that using Gibbs’ reflective questions have challenged and inspired you to reflect in more depth.**