

**NCFE**

**CACHE**

**Guidance on  
Reflective Practice  
and Placement for  
second year students**

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## Introduction

Welcome to our programme. As you begin your second, and potentially final year of study for a Teaching Assistant qualification, you may find that placement opportunities have been interrupted due to Covid-19.

This document has been developed to help you to reflect on your placement experience, the knowledge and skills that you have acquired so far and the links that you have been able to make between theoretical learning and practical experience.

Use the box below to reflect on your placement experience. It may help you to try and remember a typical day in the school or college placement, what sorts of things would you do in the morning, and later throughout the day, for example?

Activity	Reflection

## Becoming a reflective practitioner

You may have heard the term 'reflective practitioner' before or it may be something that is new to you. Being a reflective practitioner means being able to analyse, evaluate and learn from your experiences at work or in placement, building from your existing knowledge and making changes to the way you work, in order to improve your practice. A reflective practitioner will enhance children's experiences, improve outcomes for children and their families and motivate and inspire colleagues; and all of these rich qualities contribute to high quality educational environment.

The role of the Teaching Assistant is diverse and interesting.

In planning and guiding children's activities, Teaching Assistants must reflect on the different ways that children learn, and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing is also an important aspect of the role and invaluable to promote effective learning.

As a Teaching Assistant you may be involved in supporting a child with additional needs, helping a child cope with separation anxiety during the first term at primary school, helping children to manage change and transitions, dealing with bullying or supporting the mental health or emotional wellbeing of children or a young person. Providing support during these times will enable a child or young person to cope better which in turn supports their ability to learn.

**Activity**

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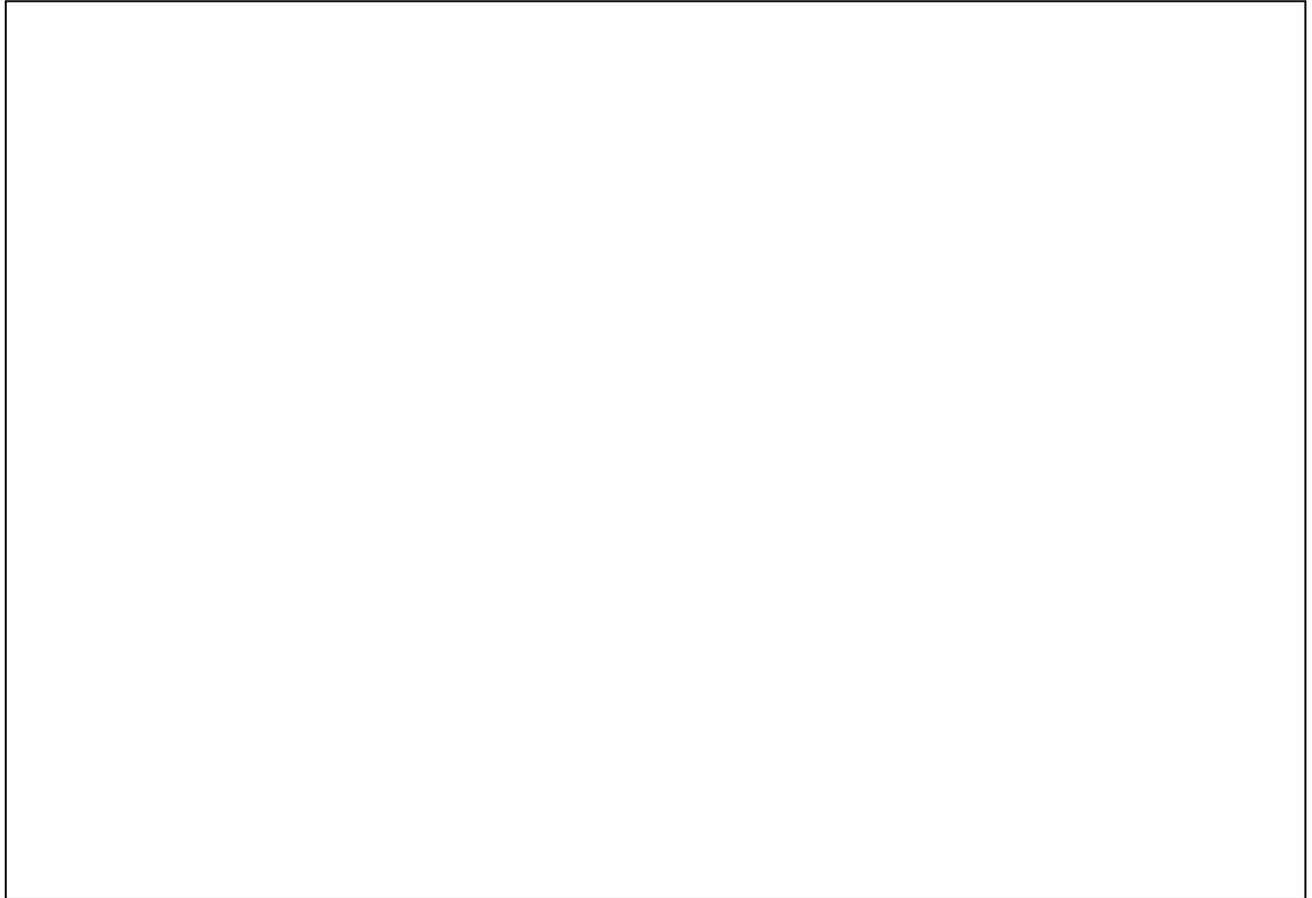
Find out about Mentally Healthy Schools, a landmark project from Heads Together and summarise what this organisation does to support children and staff in schools.

[www.headstogether.org.uk/programmes/mentally-healthy-schools/](http://www.headstogether.org.uk/programmes/mentally-healthy-schools/)

[www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/?utm\\_source=headstogether.org.uk&utm\\_medium=referral](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/?utm_source=headstogether.org.uk&utm_medium=referral)

Now choose one of the topics on the resources pages and reflect on your experiences in your placement to date. Think about your placement, can you see any of these approaches embedded and/or evident in your placement experience? Can you identify any ways to improve the support given to children? Is there anything you could do differently?

[www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their reflection on their placement experience.

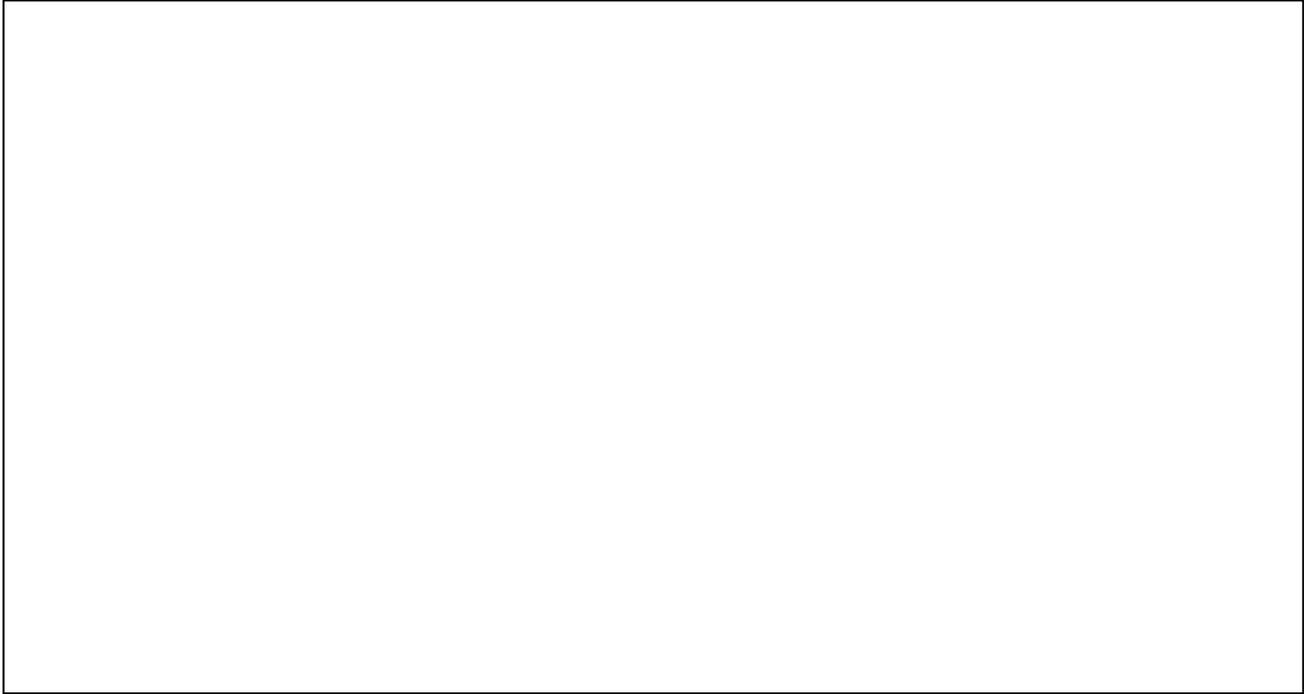
## Theoretical models of reflection and how these can be used

As we have already considered, a reflective practitioner will need to take time to think about the changes they need to make in order to improve practice as well as extend own professional development. There are many different theoretical models; two are identified below. Models for reflection are often used to help provide structure; in these cases, a sequential or cyclic approach to reflection, enabling a process for reflection to be established.

- Schon
- Gibbs

Find out about the models introduced by both Schon and Gibbs and summarise your learning in the box below:

Select a model of reflection; you can use Schon or Gibbs or a different model if you prefer, and illustrate the cycle here:



## Career aspirations

Now that you are in your second year, you will need to reflect on your next steps. You may have decided that you want to go straight to employment or you may be thinking about further study, it is also okay if you haven't really decided what you want you would like to do next yet. The following activity may support you, whatever stage you are at, in planning your next steps.

Here is a link to a career map for Education, Training and Assessment: [See the map](#)  
Use the map to help you think about next steps planning and any action you will need to take in order to support you in your exciting career journey.

You may want to read some more about the different support roles in a school or college. Explore the following links to help you think about your next steps.

Cover Supervisor

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/louise-brown/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/louise-brown/)  
[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/cover-supervisor/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/cover-supervisor/)

Teaching Assistant

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/jackie-stone/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/jackie-stone/)  
[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/teaching-assistant/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/teaching-assistant/)

Higher Level Teaching Assistant

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/rachel-grant/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/rachel-grant/)  
[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/higher-level-teaching-assistant/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/higher-level-teaching-assistant/)

Design and Technology Technician

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/stephen-garraway/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/stephen-garraway/)  
[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/design-technology-technician/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/design-technology-technician/)

English as an additional language (EAL) support assistant

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/sabine-rohde-patterson/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/sabine-rohde-patterson/)

Learning mentor

[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/lesley-dorken/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/real-life-stories/lesley-dorken/)  
[www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/learning-mentor/](http://www.skillsforschools.org.uk/roles-in-schools/learning-mentor/)

## Introducing CACHE Alumni

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No matter what stage you are at in your studies or what your career aspirations might be, being a member of CACHE Alumni will help keep you up-to-date with the Education Sector.

CACHE Alumni is an online membership network which includes articles from leading professionals in Education, Childcare and the health and social care sector to support your learning and development. It also contains other useful features, such as a CV builder, a job finder tool, careers guidance, e-learning and podcasts.

It's free to join CACHE Alumni and is suitable for you as a learner as well as when you qualify as a practitioner.

[www.cachealumni.org.uk/](http://www.cachealumni.org.uk/)

## Wider reading

EYFS statutory framework:

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/596629/EYFS\\_STATUTORY\\_FRAMEWORK\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

Guidance for teachers, school leaders, carers, parents and students

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare)

Finally, well done on all that you have achieved so far on your study programme. As a second year student you have already gained so much knowledge and skills that will support you as you enter into the next stage of your journey, there will be new topics to study, some may be challenging and we would like to encourage you in this stage of your studies.

At CACHE we are very proud of our students, and we would like to wish you every best wish for the future in this amazing career, thank you for making a positive difference to the education and childcare workforce.

We hope that you will be able to begin attending placement again soon, please take care and stay safe