

Tameside Cert. SpLD Reflective Journal

Points for Guidance

Introduction

The key word in the Title 'Reflective Journal' is the word '**reflective**'. We believe that in order to develop as professionals, practitioners need to continually **reflect critically** upon their own practice, noting what worked well and also where they need to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

The aim of the Cert SpLD Reflective Journal is to get you as a professional actively reflecting upon your work with children who have SpLD. Although for the purposes of qualification we are asking you to develop a reflective log over a set period of time with a set outcome (your 5,000 word document to be handed in), we hope that the act of regular reflection to produce the piece of work will develop in you the habit of reflecting on your work; that you will have become and will remain a 'reflective practitioner' long after the Certificate course has finished.

The Journal

The Reflective Journal will develop, in the main part, out of your 'writing up' the Tasks attached to each session on the course (see the 'Course Details' document).

The structure of the Journal would normally take the following form:

- **Introduction**

A brief **scene-setting**. Where do you work, what is your role and what responsibilities? (Age phase, particular contacts with individuals and or groups of children, etc.)

A **SWOT analysis** (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats). A 'Where am I at the start of this course, professionally speaking ?'

Although you can range across key professional issues, the focus needs to include reference to your professional contact with children with SpLD and their teachers and families. You should also link the SWOT analysis to what you hope to gain out of the course in terms of your professional knowledge, skills and understanding. (This piece could be up to 1,000 words long)

*Please be sure to keep reference to all others (be they children, their parents or staff) **anonymous**.*

- **The Main Part**

The main part off the Journal will be drawn from each of the tasks set attached to each session.

These tasks should be written up **critically and reflectively**.

The task write-ups should also be **consciously linked together, wherever possible**, with other write ups in the journal. It is a good idea to quickly re-read your journal up to date before starting the next task write up, to keep the 'big picture' of your overall professional development in mind.

So, for example, when you are writing up the SpLD 3 task on reading resources in your school, you need to:

- a) Be **critical** about their **strengths and weakness** in use with pupils with SpLD
- b) Consider these resources in **your professional experience**. How familiar are you with them. Have you actually tried them with a pupil?

How confident do you feel about using these resources in supporting SpLD pupils' reading development? How confident do you feel about teaching children with SpLD read?

- c) Compare the reading resources with the other SpLD teaching resources, written up in SpLD 1's Task.

For example is your school relatively well or badly off for SpLD reading schemes compared to other resources for SpLD. Is there an age phase for whom there is a lack of good SpLD-friendly reading schemes? Etc.

Try to pace your writing, try to keep roughly 500 words per task write up as a general guideline. Although 5.000 words sounds like a big total, you will probably be surprised at how quickly the task write-up builds wordage.

Critical Incidents In addition to the task write-ups, it may be that an episode occurs in your school setting that you feel makes a big impact upon your professional experience of working with pupils with SpLD. This might be a sudden breakthrough in a pupil's ability to blend phonemes, for example. It might on the other hand, be a negative incident, where, for example, as result of being given a task that he cannot access in a lesson, a pupil 'kicks off' with a teacher and finds himself punished.

For all incidents, as well as just a description, get reflecting critically about what this means in terms of your wider understanding of working with pupils with SpLD and maybe the nature of SpLD itself.

Be careful to allow for the wordage of these when calculating the overall wordage of the Journal.

• **Conclusions**

This last part of the journal will be almost a 'mirror image' of the Introduction.

It would be good to conduct a **second SWOT analysis**, comparing your professional stance now to what it was at the start of the course.

Reference should be made to the **role that studying on the course has had** in your professional development as well as summarising.

How your **day to day professional experience has developed**, making reference to any 'critical incident' that you wrote up in the journal.

A good way to end might be to **consider your 'next steps' professionally** (e.g. Have you

been inspired to continue onto to further study / training? How might you go about working on one or more of the 'Weaknesses' identified in your final SWOT analysis.

At the end of writing the Journal don't forget to **re-read the whole document to check its fluency and cohesion**. Try to add links between write-ups where possible. Make sure that your **word count** is not too far over or too far short of the 5,000 target. Remedy this if necessary and note the final word.

Count after your final editing in the document itself before handing it in.

- Don't forget. You are not alone!!

As well as peer support you can always contact either of us to discuss any concerns and do not forget to book your tutorial with us.

Dominic Griffiths & Amanda Edwards