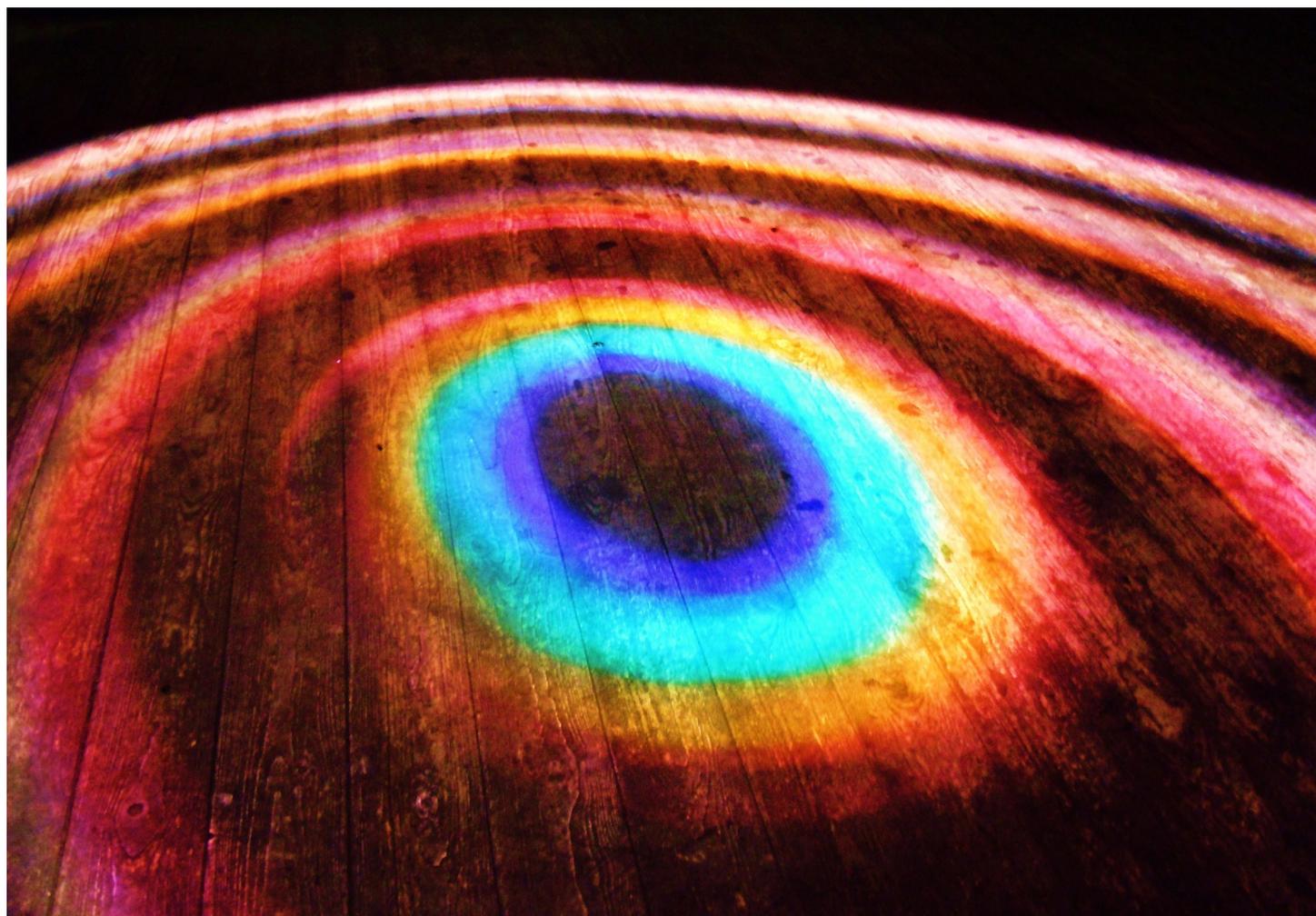


Cultural Partner's Guide to

placements

Working with researchers



The 'Afterlife of Heritage Research' Training Programme

<http://www.heritageafterlife.com>



<http://www.facebook.com/groups/heritageafterlife/>



@HeritageAfter



Afterlife of Heritage Research Project

About

The 'Afterlife of Heritage Research' Skills Training Programme (2012-13) supported more than fifty re-search students and early career researchers (ECRs) in developing skills, capacity and profiles for profes-sional careers in the heritage sector. The project's tailored training provision (including skills workshops, collaborative public engagement projects, work placements in cultural institutions and industrial mentoring) assisted students and ECRs in identifying, understanding and 'translating' the benefits of their heritage re-search in 'real-life' public, professional and business contexts.

The training programme produced four self-completion training guides that were informed by the interaction between partners and the students' and ECRs' experiences in collaborating with cultural organisations and professionals. The guides as well as reflective blog posts and short documentary films (available on the training programme's website: <http://www.heritageafterlife.com/>) aim to: assist humanities research stu-dents and ECRs in exploring how public engagement and research placements can benefit them, their re-search, and the relevance of their research to non-expert audiences; help students and ERCs think crea-tively about possible business or enterprise prospects of their research; contribute to the training provision offered by Researcher Development teams at UK Universities; and enable cultural organisations design and run placements that benefit them, researchers and the public.

Acknowledgements

With many thanks to:

Emma Anderson, Elisa Coati, Sophie Everest, Emma Gillaspay, Andy Hardman, Martin Henery, Ben Knowles, Helen Rees Leahy, Nicola Sheehan, Susan Spicer and Esme Ward.

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Introduction



Placements (or research residencies) for researchers are complementary to the process of undertaking research and are an increasingly popular way for organisations to develop ideas & networks, working in collaboration with researchers to assist in gathering data and working to apply research in a real-life context. Placements provide an opportunity for organisations to work in partnership with researchers and provide new perspectives on their practice and the impact of research on organisational activity. Placements go hand-in-hand with public engagement projects (see the “Researcher’s Guide to Engagement”), prompting audiences to be interested in research and how it applies to the real world.

This self-completion guide has been designed for cultural organisations who are new to, or have some experience of working with researchers. It will allow you to:

- Explore how research placements can benefit your organisation, and the public with whom you engage
- Discover the range of placement opportunities which can be offered to researchers
- Understand the benefits of working with researchers
- Design meaningful placements which directly benefit your organisation and the researchers with whom you work
- Reflect on the research placement process and identify ways of applying the knowledge gained in your organisation, and other contexts

You can work through the guide independently or use it as a trigger for discussion with your colleagues or researchers.

Activities are shown by



Useful resources are highlighted by



What do you hope to gain or learn by completing this guide?

What are research placements?

Placements vary significantly in their scope and format. Placements are also known by different names such as research residencies, researcher work experience, fellowships, secondments or internships. Generally, most research placements involve the collaboration of knowledge and experience between the researcher and a cultural partner or organisation. They contribute significantly to the impact of research on the wider community and the production of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1973).

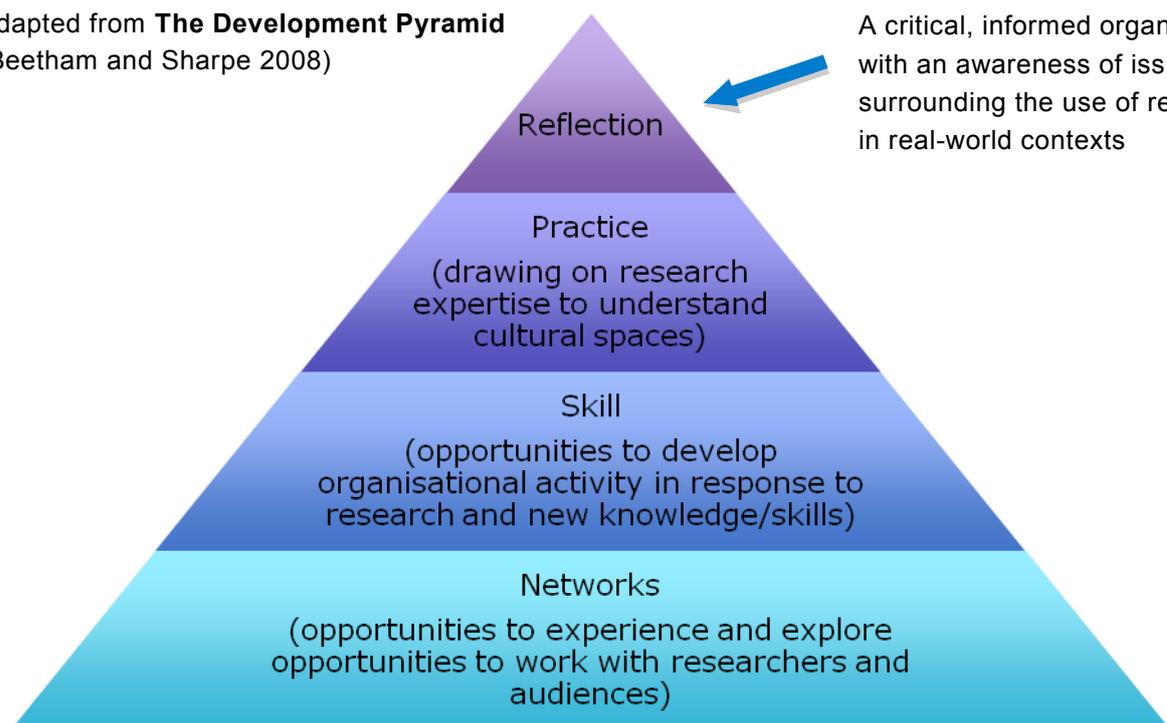
“Placements/internships can widen the talent pool available to an organisation. Placements/internship programmes allow organisations to develop a new pipeline of talent, introducing innovation and transferable skills, to build relationships with universities and to engage with university research activities. They offer the opportunity to give researchers professional development...to have experience in the job applications processes and requirements as well as work-based learning in a non-higher education environment and managing career expectations outside academia”

Work Experience: Placements/internships outside academia, Vitae

Placements cover a wide range of activities, offering organisations an opportunity to work with researchers who have specific expertise. Researchers can contribute to organisational needs by helping to managing research projects, sharing knowledge of their research, providing advice and consultation, editing material, data collection and management and preservation. This list is not exhaustive and cultural organisations are encouraged to work with researchers to design innovative placements.

The diagram below outlines the process of undertaking research placements, and how they feed into organisational activities:

Adapted from **The Development Pyramid**
(Beetham and Sharpe 2008)



There are a number of placement and research residency projects which can be run in partnership with researchers. Examples include working with archival material, shadowing and assisting colleagues working on specific projects, working with educational and public events teams, audience engagement and researching collections.



There are plenty of opportunities to collaborate with researchers



Try to envisage a typical placement activity based in your organisation, or choose an example from above – what would it look/sound like?

Identify the benefits of the placement to

1. your organisation
2. the researcher
3. the audiences with whom you engage

An ideal placement (Provide a sort description)

Benefits to the organisation

Benefits to the researcher

Benefits to the audience with whom we engage

Why carry out placement projects?

The last activity was designed to help identify the many benefits for engaging with researchers. The Research Councils are increasingly encouraging researchers and cultural (and other) organisations to work in collaboration to undertake research residencies, see for example, the ESRC's Public Placement Fellowship Scheme: <http://centrallobby.politicshome.com/fileadmin/epolitix/stakeholders/FLYER.pdf> and the AHRC's International Placement Scheme: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/InternationalPlacementScheme.aspx>.

So why should you...?

Research Councils UK (RCUK) describes this kind activity as "People Exchange", facilitating the exchange of people between the research base and other organisations:

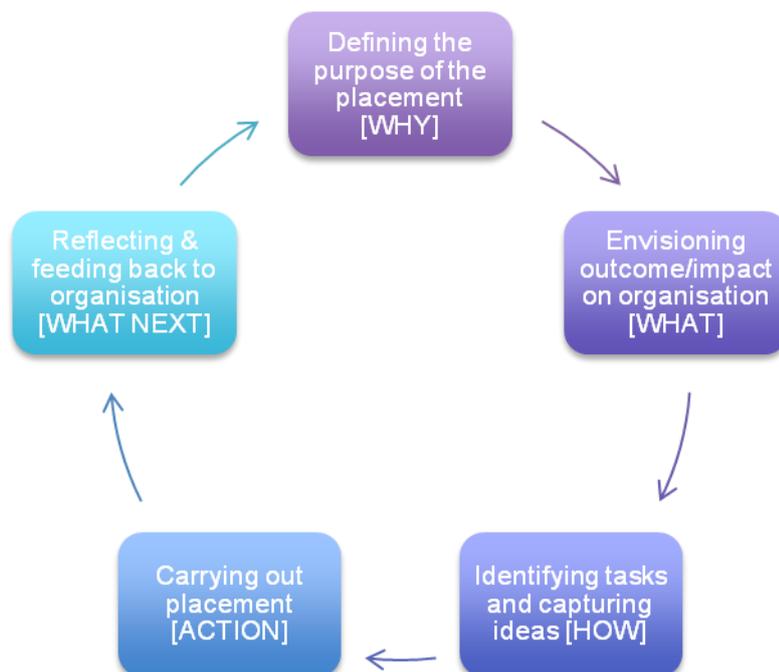
"During the secondment/placement, the secondee's expertise is applied to a project which meets a real organisational need. The secondee gains experience from working within a different organisational context, as well as the satisfaction of taking research into practice"

Research Councils UK (RCUK)



<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/ktportal/Pages/PeopleExchange.aspx>

The diagram below shows how placements feed into organisational review.



The skills and attributes that researchers can bring to an organisational setting are now recognised in the Vitae Researcher Development Framework or RDF (www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf). This new approach to researcher development outlines the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers, including a domain on engagement, influence and impact.

Vitae Researcher Development Framework

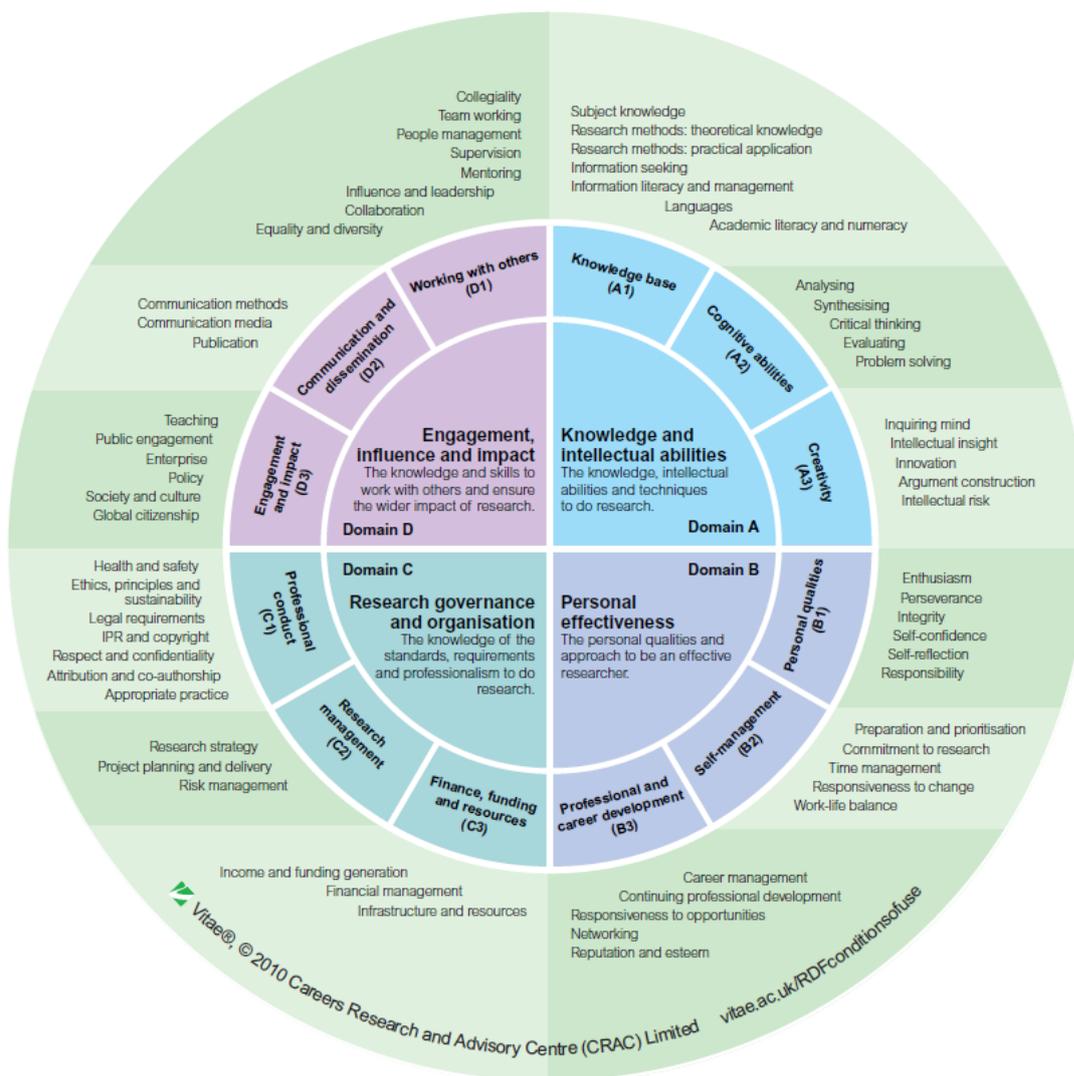


Image courtesy of Vitae®, © 2010 Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited



Identify 5 skills from the outer circle of the RDF that you consider important for researchers to bring to your organisation, and why.

Which of these skills do you feel your organisational workforce currently has experience in and which could be developed by working with researchers?

Placements and public engagement – a match made in heaven?

Placements tie in very nicely with public engagement activities, with many cultural organisations working with researchers on public engagement, educational and/or outreach activities. Public engagement has many definitions depending on your organisational strategy or perspective. It can also be known by different names, for example knowledge exchange, public involvement, or participatory enquiry. Generally, most definitions involve the collaborative sharing of knowledge and experience in a partnership which exists between the cultural organisation, the researcher and the public/audience. Public engagement is an excellent way to showcase the impact of a placement activity.

“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interactions and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit”

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)

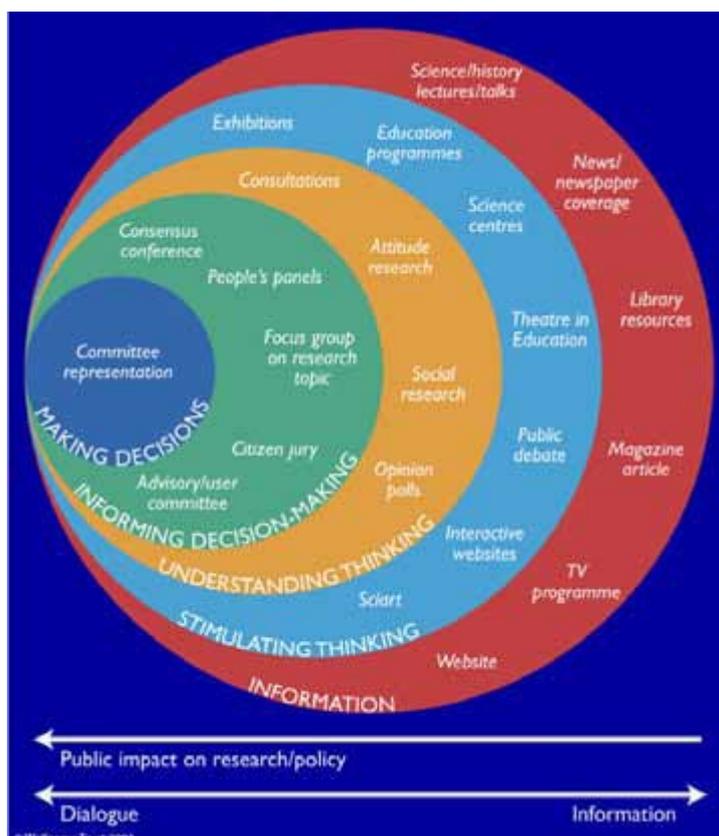
The NCCPE have categorised the range of public engagement activities as:

Informing: inspiring, informing and educating the public, and making the work of Higher Education more accessible eg. talks, displays, media, providing advice

Consulting: Actively listening to the public’s views, concerns and insights

Collaborating: Working in partnership with the public to solve problems together, drawing in each other’s expertise eg. collaborative or co-inquiry research

The Public Engagement Onion



The Wellcome Trust’s model shows public engagement methods and activities as a series of layers, like an onion. With each layer the focus moves from two-way dialogue and decision-making to information-giving. Hence the impact of working with researchers on influencing policy decreases as you move towards the outer layers of the onion.

When thinking about the types of public engagement activities you may wish to work with researchers, using the Onion model, to consider how you could create a meaningful experience based on mutual experience and knowledge of the placement or research residency. Depending on the nature of your organisation, some activities may have a more natural or obvious fit.

Image courtesy of the The Wellcome Trust

Expectations of the placement process



There are many expectations associated with the placement process. Use this space to note down your expectations.

Expectations of myself as a representative of my organisation?

Expectations of the process?

Expectations of my organisation?

Expectations of the university & researcher?

Strategies – Designing a placement suitable for researchers



Researchers may design their own research placement before approaching you as a cultural organisation to take it forward. There is scope, however, to design placement activities for researchers before locating a suitable person. Use this space to explore the design of a placement based in your organisation.

Brief description of research placement:

Experience / skills to develop:

Resources / materials / data required:

Which types of researcher:

Timing / Structure:

Outcomes / Impact:

Strategies for Evaluation:

Uses for the organisation:

Strategies continued – Job Description & Person Specification

Another way of designing a placement based within your organisation is to come up with a job description and person specification which can be used when approaching a university or individual researchers. By effectively “creating” a job within your organisation, it makes it easier for you and researchers to work together, and to manage each other’s expectations.



The Perfect Placement

Use the space below, come up with a brief placement description and researcher specification for the placement you designed on page 10. The placement description should concisely describe the aims and outcomes of the placement, the timing and the purpose. The researcher specification should describe the skills, knowledge and attributes of the person who could fulfil that post.

Placement title

Placement description

Researcher specification

Capitalising on researcher strengths – identifying their interests and needs

An alternative strategy (especially for those researchers, and cultural organisations, who are unsure about how to design a suitable placement) is to approach a researcher to design a placement in partnership.



What do you need to think about when approaching a researcher to design a placement in partnership? How might you go about identifying the interests and needs of researchers?

Placements in practice

Whilst placement design is important, it's also crucial to consider how the placement might work in practice. It's impossible to predict how the placement will pan out, but there are strategies you can put in place to ensure that your organisation gets the most out of the process whilst you work with researchers.



Powerful questions – the placement health-check

Considering the following questions can ensure that your placement goes to plan

- Remain mindful of organisational need – what do you want to achieve?
- Have you negotiated the timing and frequency of the researcher's project?
- What resources are you able to offer the researcher whilst they are on placement?
- What are the researcher's expectations of you in the process?
- Who can you talk to if issues arise?
- How can you ensure that your researcher collects the right data?
- How will you reflect on the process?
- What does 'progress' with the project look like?
- What if the researcher needs more time?
- How will you bring the placement to a natural close with the researcher?
- What will happen after the placement?

Coaching & Mentoring Researchers – Why is it important?

Working on placements is an opportunity to coach and mentor early-career researchers and assist them to apply their research in different organisational settings.

Coaching and mentoring are often interchangeable terms but they remain slightly separate concepts.

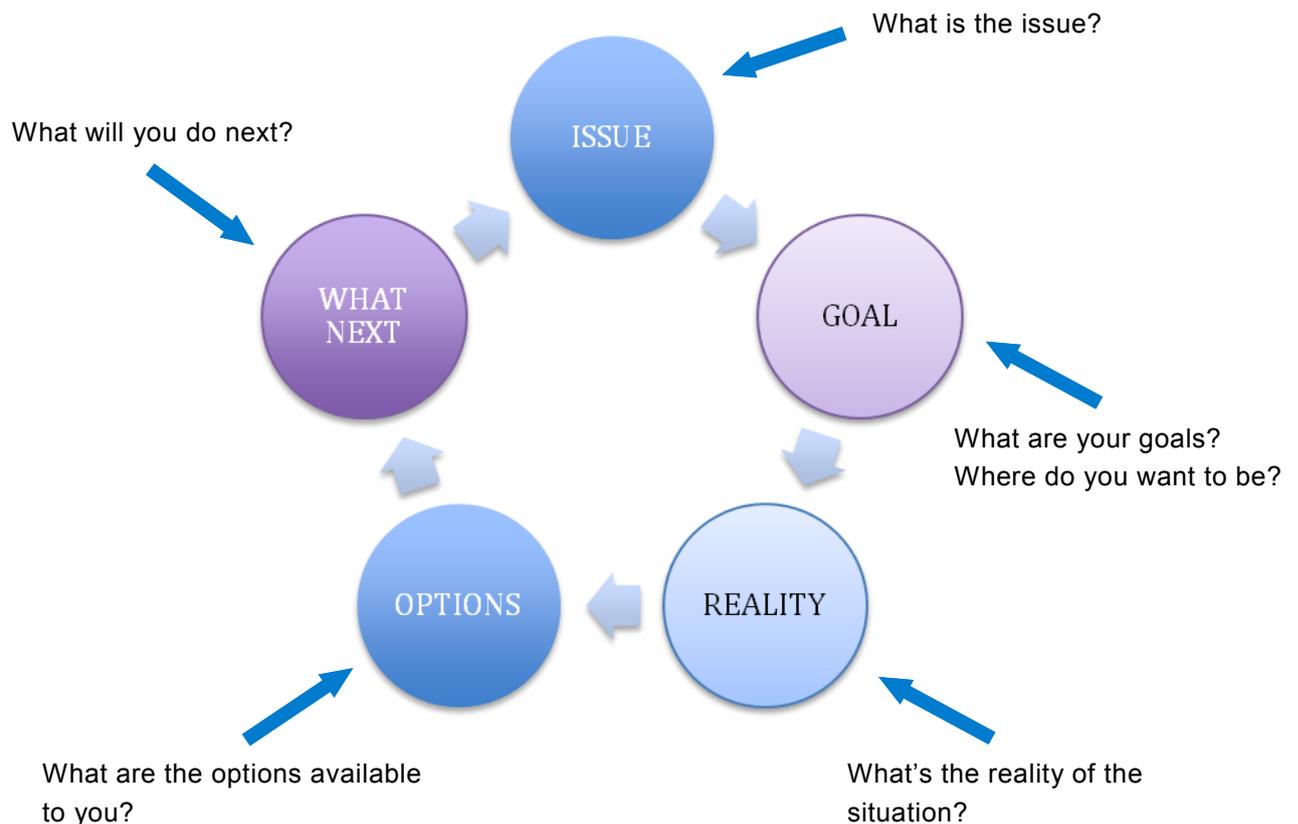
Coaching is “a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful Coach requires a knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of skills, styles and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place

Eric Parsloe The Manager as Coach and Mentor (1999)

Mentoring is “off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking” ”

Clutterbuck & Megginson (1999)

Informal coaching and mentoring can help to manage performance, solve issues and create rapport. The GROW model of coaching and mentoring, pioneered by Whitmore et al, is one of the most helpful ways of exploring coaching with researchers. Using the GROW model enables the coach to ask useful questions of the coachee, ensuring that the researcher is in the best position possible to realise his/her potential. The iGROW model (outlined below) enables the coach and coachee to identify issues before considering the rest of the coaching process.



Reflective Practice

What is reflective practice? Why is it important?

Reflective practice is integral to any project and applies equally to research placements. Reflecting on the placement process allows organisations and researchers to learn from the experience and apply the knowledge elsewhere. It also helps to clarify expectations, aims and objectives. The reflective process starts from day one from the placement design right through to evaluating activity and deciding where to go next (refer to the cycle on page *)

The importance of reflective practice was outlined by Donald Schon in his book *The Reflective Practitioner* in 1983. Schon defined reflective practice as the process of critically refining one's own craft or discipline through reflection. Schon's definition of the "reflective practitioner" suggests that it can be a professional characteristic, as well as a process. Schon made an important distinction within the reflective process – the distinction between *reflection in action* and *reflection on action*. Reflection in action can often be associated with the process of thinking on one's feet – the process of reflecting whilst in the situation itself, whilst having the experience. Reflection on action, however, is the process on reflecting after the experience. Both are integral to the research process. Recently, Jennifer Moon has described reflective practice as a mental process with purpose and/or outcome (*Reflection in Learning & Professional Development*, 1999). In a research placement context, reflective practice can help when reviewing progress, defending placement outcomes, reflecting on the experience and when responding to feedback and evaluation. Reflection is also crucial when working with researchers and in a public engagement context.

Reflection can be structured, where the reflective practitioner chooses a particular structure to their work (reflective questions, format etc), or unstructured, where the format is open-ended. Reflection is crucial to the placement cycle where the cultural partner can influence the direction of the research placement, based on organisational need.

Reflective practice does take time – time needs to be factored in to the placement process in order to make sure that learning is documented appropriately. The advantages of reflective practice in research placements are many and varied:

- A better understanding of the motivations for placement partnerships
- Developing organisational-awareness, including knowledge of strengths & weaknesses
- Gain insight into how to manage opportunities and threats
- Discover what affects performance and progress
- Develop insights and critical judgment
- Develop knowledge & critical voice
- Using feedback positively & constructively, get the most from working with researchers
- Enhance outcomes

Blogging is an excellent way to document progress in a research project, and blog posts can be written by cultural partners as well as researchers. Reflection can take many forms and can be electronic or otherwise. Research journals can be written in notebooks, or on a blog, or using software such as MS Word. Mindmapping is also an excellent way of reflecting. Reflection can be public or private – but it is always personal. For examples of reflective work on placements please read the Afterlife blog: <http://www.heritageafterlife.com>.

Reflective models

There exist a large number of reflective models, most are accessible via a simple Google search. One of the best models is by Gibbs (1998).



Diagram adapted from Gibbs' model of reflective practice.



Recommended reading:

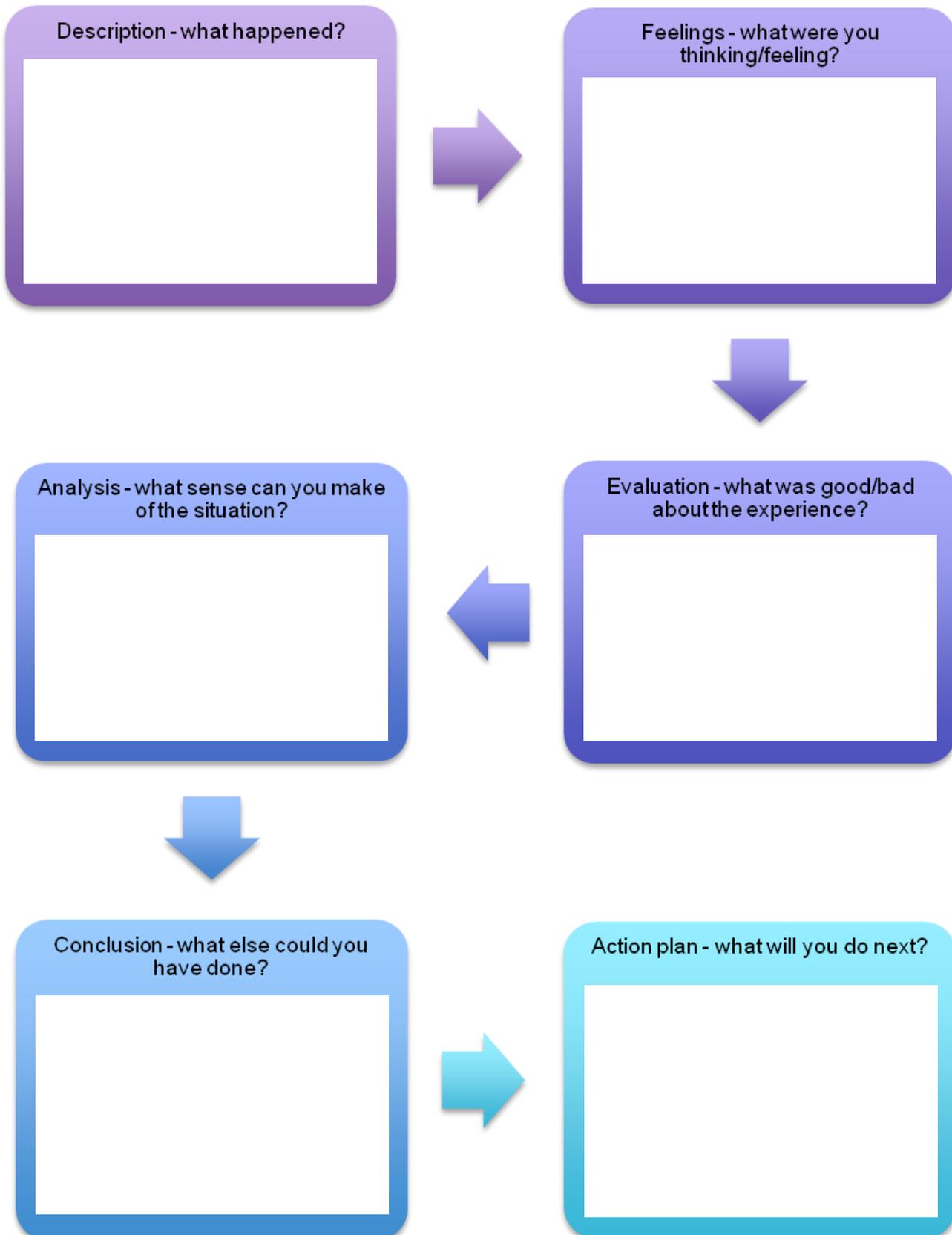
- Beech, Brockbank & McGill, *Reflective Learning in Practice* (2002)
- Bolton, G. *Reflective Practice: Writing & Professional Development* (2010)
- Hennessey, S. *Reflective Practice in Arts Education* (2006)
- Johns, C. *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner* (2000)
- Moon, J. *A Handbook of Reflective & Experiential Learning Theory & Practice* (2004)
- Schon, D. *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983)

Reflective models – continued



Structured Reflection using Gibbs' (1998) model

Use this space to reflect on specific stages of a placement project, and the process. The more regular the reflection, the better documented the experience for the organisation and the greater the impact of the project.





To Do / Next Actions

Use this space to identify the next actions for working with researchers and designing placement projects e.g. research/contact Universities and/or individual researchers.

Working with Researchers to Evaluate Impact

Whilst reflective practice is a form of evaluation, it's also worthwhile formally evaluating your placement activity, in partnership with the researcher, and sharing the results within your organisation, and with different audiences.



My Evaluation Plan

Complete an evaluation plan for a placement activity using the following questions/headings:

- What do we want to achieve?
- What data collection techniques will be used?
- How will the data be analysed?
- How will outcomes be evaluated?
- How will the results be shared?
- What are the next steps?
- Is there scope to continue/develop the project in the future?
- How can you feed back the information / experience to the organisation?
- How will you illicit feedback from the researcher involved?
- Is there publishable material here?
- How can you share your experience with other organisations?
- How will I report on my activity?
- Are there any showcase / public engagement opportunities to take part in with researchers?

Long-term Researcher Connections

A placement profile can really boost connections with the academic and research community. Many researchers and cultural organisations are now using Web 2.0 technologies (such as Wordpress and Twitter) to explore the impact of their work within, and beyond, the organisation. Having a record of organising placements within your organisation will set you apart from other organisations and provide a real-world narrative for what you are doing, which is an excellent way of attracting funding and getting involved in future public engagement/research activities.

Blog posts:

<http://www.heritageafterlife.com>



How will you integrate placement partnerships into your organisational profile?

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Cultural Partner's guide to:

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Cultural Partner's Guide to

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Working with researchers

About the author

This guide has been written by **Dr Emily McIntosh** with helpful input from Suzanne Spicer and Dr. Kostas Arvanitis. Emily has worked in the field of Researcher Development for the last four and a half years and is interested in supporting researchers to embark on placements which will enhance their academic profile and employability. Emily was project coordinator on the Afterlife of Heritage Research project and worked with many researchers to help them design placements, including running the Research to Profession training workshops.

Contact

If you are interested in finding out more about placement and internship opportunities at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Manchester, please contact **Dr Louise Davies**, PGR Placements and Partnerships Officer, Louise.Davies-2@manchester.ac.uk.

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The 'Afterlife of Heritage Research' Training Programme



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