



Inspiring Tomorrow's Teachers

CREATIVITY

**TARGETED
INTERVENTIONS**

**THINKING
CRITICALLY**

COLLABORATION



**SECONDARY
PRE-COURSE INDUCTION TASKS
2026-2027**

Dear Trainee Teacher,

We are delighted that you have chosen to begin your career in teaching with Colchester Teacher Training Consortium, and we are very much looking forward to working with you. It is our aim to provide you with the high-quality training and education you will need to become an inspirational teacher. Working in close partnership with a range of schools and practitioners, you will be offered a wide-range of experiences and expertise from which to learn.

The CTTC curriculum is designed to allow you to spend the majority of your training year in schools, observing teaching professionals and applying the knowledge and skills learned during central training in your own classroom. This will set you on your path to become a confident, skilled and highly reflective practitioner.

Teaching is one of the best jobs in the world, but you will inevitably be presented with a range of challenges along the way. However, through collaboration with your mentor and the training team, who will provide you with support, developmental feedback and practical strategies, you will also celebrate when you experience that 'light bulb' moment in one of your lessons, or when that pupil who rarely speaks chooses to share their news with you. These moments are priceless!

To fully prepare you for the exciting and challenging year ahead, you will find in this pre-course Handbook some preliminary information and some pre-course reading and tasks for you to complete before September. These are designed to ensure that you start to build your subject knowledge and to feel confident with your understanding of how you can make an impact on pupils' learning. Key topics for you to consider are how to challenge and support pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), effective assessment strategies, and the importance of engaging pupils and applying effective behaviour management techniques.

Please keep evidence of your reading and tasks and bring them with you when you start your training, ready to share your insights and findings during the induction period. The official start date of the course is **Tuesday 1st September**, when you will spend the first three days in your first placement school. This will give you the opportunity to meet your mentor and the rest of the department, to attend the safeguarding briefings and whole-staff training, and to observe teachers setting their expectations with their new classes. You will then spend five days with us at the training centre, attending a number of sessions preparing you for your time in school.

The journey towards joining a fantastic and rewarding profession has begun, and we hope you enjoy every step of the way!

We look forward to working with you, and very best wishes for a successful and happy start to your teaching career.



John Lovett
Assistant Consortium Director
Colchester Teacher Training Consortium

Pre-Course Tasks and Induction

Contents

1	An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature
2	Developing an Understanding of Metacognition and How Pupils Learn
3	Developing Reading and Promoting Reading for Pleasure
4	Developing an Understanding of How to Support and Challenge Pupils with Special Educational Needs
5	Subject Knowledge Audit
6	The National Curriculum and Exam Specifications
7	The Chartered College of Teaching and Teaching Unions
8	Key Stage 2 (Primary) Experience
9	Recommended Reading
10	Appendices

Pre-Course Reading and Tasks

Your training year is a very busy time, so we really want you to start with strong foundations and feeling confident. This takes preparation to achieve, so we'd like you to complete the following reading and tasks, prior to starting the course, and ask that you bring them with you to the induction sessions during the first week.

1. An introduction to the PGCE and academic literature
2. Developing an understanding of metacognition and how pupils learn
3. Developing reading and promoting reading for pleasure
4. Developing an understanding of how to support and challenge pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
5. Subject Knowledge Audit
6. The National Curriculum and Exam Specifications
7. The Chartered College of Teaching and Teaching Unions
8. Key Stage 2 (Primary) experience
9. Recommended Reading
10. Appendices

1. An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

As part of your PGCE course, you will be required to complete two assignments and an oral presentation during the academic year. Completion of these assignments requires engagement with a wide range of academic literature.

These assignments offer you the opportunity to think critically and to develop your own classroom practice. In preparation for these assignments, we would like you to undertake some reading on a topic of your choice before participating in some reflective discussions during the induction sessions.

Pre-Course Task:

- Please select **3-4 articles** on an educational topic of your choice. There are some suggestions in **Appendix 1** that you are welcome to use, or you can select a topic and texts of your own.
- Complete your reading and make sufficient notes on each of the articles to be able to recall your thoughts. A Professional Development Reading Log can be found in **Appendix 2**, or you can use a different preferred format for recording your reading.
- Be prepared to participate in a reflective group discussion arising from your reading during the initial induction sessions.

Suggested Texts:

In **Appendix 1** you will find a list of articles organised by topics:

- Praise and Rewards
- Assessment for Learning
- Group Work and Collaborative Learning
- Reading for Pleasure

2. Developing an Understanding of Metacognition and How Pupils Learn

When you start planning and teaching lessons, you will need to have an understanding of how pupils learn and how this can be affected by cognitive load on the working memory. This is underpinned by Rosenshine's 'Principles of Instruction'.

Pre-Course Reading:

Please read and make notes on the article '*Principles of Instruction*' by Barak Rosenshine (2012). See link below:

[Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know, by Barak Rosenshine; American Educator Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring 2012, AFT](#)

3. Developing Reading and Promoting Reading for Pleasure

In 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) issued *The Reading Framework*. Please read **the Introduction and Section 1 (pages 4-20) and Section 8 (pages 91-102)** using the link below. Please note, you do not need to complete the audits in Section 8.

[The reading framework](#)

Whilst we may not physically need to teach children to read in secondary schools (although this is sometimes necessary), all educators, **regardless of our subject specialism or phase**, have a fundamental role in developing the literacy of our pupils in reading, writing, and speaking. Developing and promoting reading for pleasure is at the heart of improving literacy and, as role models as both subject teachers and form tutors, we should be able to recommend and discuss high quality books with our pupils.

Pre-Course Task:

Select and read **one** appropriate fiction book for either Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4. Write a short book review which would be appropriate to share with your pupils (in preparation, for example, for them writing their own book review in tutor time). The review should persuade others as to why they should read the book and can be presented in written, spoken or video form.

You will have the opportunity to share your book review with your fellow trainees during the induction sessions. Good sources for recommended books for each age group can be found by following the links below. Alternatively, you can choose an appropriate book of your own. You may, for example, choose a book that inspired you when you were younger.

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/secondary-ks3-ks4-reading-lists/>

[Great Books Guide | BookTrust](#)

4. Developing an Understanding of How to Support and Challenge Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

When you start teaching, you will need to have a good understanding of the full range of special educational needs and disabilities within your classes. Therefore, it will be important to learn about how pupils with SEND can be supported and challenged.

Pre-Course Reading:

Before starting the course, please read and make notes on **Chapter 1 (pages 19-29)** and **Chapter 6 (pages 91-110)** of the SEND Code of Practice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

5. Subject Knowledge Audit

In order to support you to identify your baseline knowledge in your specialist subject, and for us to be able to provide you with targeted interventions and support to fully develop your subject knowledge, please find attached a subject knowledge audit for you to complete (**Appendix 3**). Please work through the audit and identify areas of strength and areas that need further development.

This information will be shared with your Lead Subject Mentor (LSM) who will use the information to provide you with the support you need throughout your training year. You will also need to be pro-active in closing gaps in your subject knowledge.

6. The National Curriculum and Exam Specifications

Essential for any teacher is to have a copy of the statutory **National Curriculum** and related **Programmes of Study**. You can view and download an online version here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>. Please start to familiarise yourself with the content and expectations as soon as possible. This important document outlines your statutory obligation for the content of your teaching in schools.

It is also important that you become familiar with the content of the GCSE exam specifications in your specialist subject area. Most schools will use the exam boards below:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/>

<https://www.ocr.org.uk>

[Edexcel GCSEs | Pearson qualifications](#)

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/>

You do not need to prepare anything for this task other than having read the relevant specifications.

7. The Chartered College of Teaching and Teaching Unions

The [Chartered College of Teaching](https://www.cct.org.uk/) is the professional body for teachers. They are dedicated to bridging the gap between practice and research and equipping teachers, from the moment they enter the classroom, with the knowledge and confidence to make the best decisions for their pupils. Membership provides teachers with access to a wealth of research, resources and insight to enable excellent teaching. Membership is **free** whilst you are a trainee, so we highly recommend joining up.

It is crucial that you join an appropriate Teaching Union before embarking on working in schools. Unions provide critical legal advice and support should the unthinkable ever happen and an allegation is made against you. Whilst we will train you how to minimise your risk of allegation, it is a potential threat that any of us could face when working with children and young people. Therefore, for full support, please ensure you join a union ready for September. Membership is **free** during your training year and whilst you are an ECT (Early Career Teacher). The two most popular Unions are the NASUWT and NEU but other Unions are available:

<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/>

<https://neu.org.uk/>

8. Key Stage 2 (Primary) Experience

It is a Department for Education (DfE) requirement that all trainees in secondary education gain some Key Stage 2 experience in order to give you an insight into the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school, as well as an understanding of how your subject is taught in primary school. We, therefore, kindly ask that you make arrangements to spend **a minimum of one day** in a primary school, which we would strongly encourage you to complete **prior to the start of the course**. In order to help you with this, please find attached a letter template to send to primary schools in your local area (**see Appendix 4**). We suggest that you telephone the school in the first instance and ask for the name of the best person to send the letter to. This may or may not be the Headteacher. Although it is not a pre-requisite to carry out this experience prior to the start of the course, **it is a DfE requirement to do so during your training year in order to successfully complete the course**. Therefore, if you do not manage to arrange this visit before the course begins, you will need to arrange to do so at some point during the Autumn Term, before the Christmas break. If you are currently or have recently (over the last 12 months) either worked or volunteered in a primary school, you will not need to complete this experience. You will, however, need to provide proof by asking the Headteacher (or whoever you worked with) to sign the attached document (**Appendix 5**). Alternatively, an email from the headteacher (or whoever you worked with), sent from a professional email address, will suffice.

9. **Recommended Reading**

Every year, trainees ask us for recommended reading before embarking on the course. With so many books about education out there on a wide range of subjects, this is an impossible question to answer. However, if you do wish to purchase a single book which will stand you in good stead in terms of your subject specialism, we recommend the '*Learning to Teach Subjects in the Secondary School*' series, published by Routledge. There is a version available for just about every secondary curriculum subject and you can often pick these up second hand. However, do try to get hold of the most up-to-date edition if you can. Please find below the links for the English and Maths versions by way of example:

[Learning to Teach English in the Secondary School: A Companion to School Experience \(Learning to Teach Subjects in the Secondary School Series\): Amazon.co.uk: Davison, Jon: 9781138580473: Books](#)

[Learning to Teach Mathematics in the Secondary School: A companion to school experience \(Learning to Teach Subjects in the Secondary School Series\) : Johnston-Wilder, Sue, Lee, Clare, Pimm, David: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

There is also a more general text in this series which is also highly recommended:

[Learning to Teach in the Secondary School: A Companion to School Experience \(Learning to Teach Subjects in the Secondary School Series\): Amazon.co.uk: Capel, Susan, Leask, Marilyn, Younie, Sarah: 9781138307599: Books](#)

Please note that whilst these books are highly recommended, it is not essential that you purchase them.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Sample Topics and Articles for Task 1: An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

Appendix 2:

Professional Development Reading Log

Appendix 3:

Subject Knowledge Audit

Appendix 4:

Letter Template for Key Stage 2 (Primary) Experience

Appendix 5:

Key Stage 2 (Primary) Experience – Headteacher Signature

Appendix 6:

Essex and Suffolk County Councils - Term Dates

Appendix 1:

Sample Topics and Articles for Task 1: An Introduction to the PGCE and Academic Literature

Please note: all articles are saved in zipped folders attached to the email

Praise and Rewards

Bear et al (2017) *Rewards, praise, and punitive consequences: Relations with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*

Markelz, Riden & Floress (2021) *Teachers' Use of Specific, Contingent, and Varied Praise*

Partin et al (2010) *Using Teacher Praise and Opportunities to Respond to Promote Appropriate Student Behaviour*

Payne (2015) *Using rewards and sanctions in the classroom: pupils' perceptions of their own responses to current behaviour management strategies*

Rila, Wilkinson & Floress (2025) *High School Students' Preferences for Praise and Reprimand: A Pilot Study*

Royer & Ennis (2024) *Student-delivered behavior-specific praise: a systematic literature review and meta-analysis*

Assessment for Learning

Baird et al (2017) *Assessment and Learning: fields apart?*

Black & Wiliam (2010) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*

Black & Wiliam (2018) *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*

Clark (2015) *Formative assessment: translating high-level curriculum principles into classroom practice*

Dixon & Worrell (2016) *Formative and Summative Assessment in the Classroom*

Wisniewski, Zierer & Hattie (2020) *The Power of Feedback Revisited: A Meta-Analysis of Educational Feedback Research*

Group Work and Collaborative Learning

Ambreen (2020) *Children's Perspectives Toward Ability-Based Group Work in a Primary Classroom*

Baines et al (2009) *Improving pupil group work interaction and dialogue in primary classrooms: results from a year-long intervention study*

Chandra (2015) *Collaborative Learning for Educational Achievement*

Gillies (2019) *Promoting academically productive student dialogue during collaborative learning*

Le, Janssen & Wubbels (2019) *Collaborative learning practices: teacher and student perceived obstacles to effective student collaboration*

Nokes-Malach, Richey & Gadgil (2015) *When Is It Better to Learn Together? Insights from Research on Collaborative Learning*

Reading for Pleasure

Appleman & Hinchman (2016) *The Power of Fostering Pleasure in Reading*

Cremin & Scholes (2024) *Reading for pleasure: scrutinising the evidence base – benefits, tensions and recommendations*

Hempel-Jorgensen et al (2017) *Understanding boys (dis)engagement with reading for pleasure: Project findings*

Lockwood (2012) *Attitudes to Reading in English Primary Schools*

Teravainen-Goff, Clark & Brown (2023) *Young Readers Programme: Developing a love of reading in primary schools*

Vogriničič Čepič, Mascia & Aerila (2024) *Reading for Pleasure: A Review of Current Research*

Appendix 2:

Professional Development Reading Log

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