

Reflection on Early Years Practice

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Presentation reference list

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Reflective log

Brief description of the activity
Circle time incorporating the “welcome to nursery” song, the weather and counting. To go around the class and ask how the children are feeling this morning and how they got to nursery. Aged 2-3 years of age and a group of 7 children. The language was bilingual English/Welsh. Using a range of props and display cards to help children choose a song and the weather, with one other member of staff. Lasted 15 minutes.
Aim/Objective of the activity
The aim of this activity is to engage with children in a safe space, giving them the opportunity to speak and be listened to. This encourages the child to embrace one-another’s stories and experiences then relate to each other. Having a space where children are given opportunities to convey their feelings to staff offers an insight into how the children may be feeling that morning which can help support how the session will go. Children will learn the weather and counting through the mediums of Welsh and English, allowing them to learn through the use of songs and rhymes. It will also encourage children to take turns, show empathy, sit and listen. This will also build the children’s knowledge of how routines can link to different times of the day and build their knowledge and understanding of the weather and the world around them. Allow opportunities for children to have choice by being able to pick a prop to match the song they may want to sing.
Your role
To plan a fun session that is age appropriate and involves every child no matter what their ability may be. To facilitate a space where every child is heard, and their voice is respected. To ask open ended questions to allow conversations to flow freely and for children to understand that listening to their friends and staff is important. This supports my learning about each individual child and building my relationship with the children. Listen and observe how children interact with myself and others to gain an insight on how they manage being involved in group activities. Knowing that children enjoy learning through songs and rhymes from previous attempts of this

activity, allows me to incorporate key learning points such as weather songs within the circle time. Building on their prior knowledge and adding more information if needed. This gives children the time to build on what they may already know.

To use Welsh and English cooperatively as the nursery setting is bilingual and I have a duty to encourage both languages through my interaction with the children. As children within the setting will leave to go to full time school, my role is to get them ready to be active learners by giving them opportunities to explore, experience and investigate.

Giving the children a choice of what song they would like to sing but also encouraging the other children to be patient and take turns.

Positive aspects – why?

Fun, positive for all involved and my confidence in delivering learning has increased as the more I put myself in front of children with an outcome to meet, I can feel my confidence growing.

Passing on the Welsh language to the next generation and seeing the children repeating the language they have learnt shows that they are engaging in my activity.

Giving children the opportunities for their experiences and stories to be heard and give them a choice in what songs they want to sing.

Challenging aspects – why?

Due to the children's ages, some of their attention can tend to wonder and it can be hard to bring them back to the task.

My Welsh is limited to basic knowledge that I have picked up through school and learning from others.

The children's speech is at different levels so having to listen and give them the time to be able to communicate whilst keeping the other children engaged was difficult. However, having the extra staff member did help by supporting me in allowing the space for all to share.

What knowledge was demonstrated?
In how children learn, which is supported from doing my play work and childcare level 3 and what I am learning through my degree. Also, understanding how children learn through play and incorporating learning opportunities by using the knowledge from both repetitions of these activities and what I have learnt. To plan and apply the learning outcomes through activities that are age appropriate. Knowing the children, I could see what their interests were and how knowing they enjoy singing helped me plan songs that could be chosen by props to support the learning of the weather.
What skills were demonstrated?
Listening skills and encouraging children to take time to listen to others. Knowing what questions lead to children gaining interest by the use of open ended questions. Understanding the tone of my voice helps engage children especially when working with young children. Seeing me excited helps them to become excited. Learning that some children needed encouragement to be confident in sharing their experiences as some children were shy and that it was okay not to share a lot or none if they did not want to. To be able to adapt to how children respond and learn to suit individual needs at spur of the moment to include them all.
Which values were demonstrated?
Having empathy and understanding each child's experiences Children respecting me and them being happy to share their feelings with me, which is a sign of trust Remembering what conversations, me and the children have had in the past and using it to gain their interest and show that I have listened to them previously.

What could have been done differently? Why?
Knowing some children may not be able to communicate fully with how they are feeling I could use the emotion puppets to help children express how they are feeling. Some children were wandering, which is okay if it is not distracting. However, at some points it was distracting so maybe shortening the length of the circle time could have helped wandering children.

Briefing paper

Introduction

The use of reflection can be done in many contexts. It can be used to reflect on oneself or on the services being offered. It can give an insight and a deeper understanding on how to maintain and improve the quality of service. The purpose of this paper is to inform practitioners who work in the early years of the importance of reflective practice and how it can support sustaining a well-run service (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018).

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is something that can be done to continuously consider how an experience, or an activity went. Within early years, as practitioner's activities do not always go as planned, reflecting can give opportunities to recognise what went right, what went wrong, and how it can be changed to suit by building on past experiences (Lindon and Trodd, 2010).

Often, looking at the bigger picture allows practitioners to look beyond and in a broader light than just reflecting on a situation or an activity. This can be achieved by not only looking at how they felt about it as a whole, but by also considering the process leading up to it (Hayes et al., 2014).

Having the time to reflect allows practitioners opportunities to think and learn from activities and the learning opportunities they provide for children and how they manage the setting as a whole (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011).

Reflection in action	Reflection on action
Often, practitioners reflect without realising they are even doing it. Whilst doing an activity with children, adapting the activity to meet a child's needs is sometimes easy for those who are used to reflecting in action. This offers opportunities to continually reflect and analyse which will better future learning.	After an event has past, time spent reflecting on what worked and what did not is often the foundation to being able to plan change for the next time, learning from experience. (Collier and Williams, 2005)

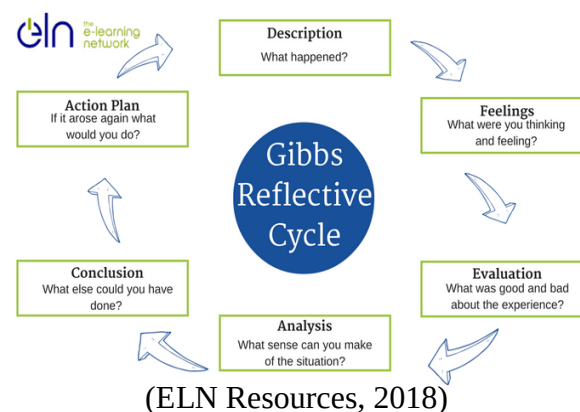
Why is it important in early years?

Having children involved in thinking for themselves and investigating what went right and wrong can support sustained shared thinking. Having practitioners and children learning from one another by the use of reflection and investigating how to evolve their ideas through talking through the activity, can support children's cognitive development by encouraging them to thinking deeper (Hallet, 2012).

Observing children during play gives practitioners the opportunity to learn what a child's interests are and then plan to suit the children within their care. Reflective practice can help provide a service that is unique to each child and not categorising children all the same. It also assures that progress is being made with helping children learn and develop due to inspection and standards documenting how children learn and how staff are being supported. This is often part of working in the early years (Progress Matters Reviewing and enhancing young children's development, 2009).

Reflective models

Reflective models are a tool used to break down experiences in order to reflect on what has happened. Looking at the different sections which are shown below, Graham Gibbs devised a reflective cycle that gives practitioners opportunities to learn. This model can be adapted to be used by children or adults. There are many reflective models that can be used to suit the practitioner in what they want to reflect on and what is best suited to them (Amulya, 2011).



Does it help improve services?

Reflective practice gives opportunities for practitioners to critically reflect and ensure inclusiveness and equality within their practice. It is important to ensure all needs are thought of whilst planning and carrying out activities and no child is being left out due to individual needs. Adapting practices to include everyone gives children a greater chance in learning (Moyle, 2010).

Learning from a past experience will allow the practitioner to change services which can lead to bettering the service offered. Often questionnaires are given to parents, staff and children who use the setting to help the setting leaders gain an insight on which areas may need improving (Carr, 2011).

Reflecting on comments given can help to shape a quality service that is given, whether it be through offering staff better training or giving parents more opportunities to voice their opinions (Early Education, 2012). It can be used when working with multi-agency teams to plan an individual care plan or in order to safeguard children. But as a whole it can be used to develop your thinking as a practitioner, manage your wellbeing and create a service which promotes progressive thinking (Cheminais, 2010).

Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Learn Welsh to be able to support myself and learners	As more welsh nurseries are open within Wales it is becoming more common for Welsh to be desirable as part of the role. It is a personal ambition of mine to be able to speak Welsh and help children learn multi languages. It will give me an advantage when looking for work within Wales and being able to communicate with a range of people.	To gain information about Welsh courses around my area. Use what Welsh language I do know every day to help me gain confidence in speaking it. To put time and effort into learning a language which I know will be difficult however very rewarding. As my work and university life is very busy I need to balance my time to make sure I do not create too much work for myself as having downtime is also very important to my wellbeing.	My welsh speaking colleagues can help support and encourage me to speak it and inform me of the correct way to pronounce. This helps me as I learn best through doing and trying a new skill. Also look at college/university courses in my area that can work around my work life.	Started to look for courses. However, some do not suit my working and university times. This makes it difficult to manage time. I am also weary of overloading myself. Once confident that I can balance more learning I will start.

2. Knowledge Learning in the outdoors and how it can support children's learning.	Having been on many courses to do with outdoor learning, I would like to incorporate my knowledge of the benefits of outdoor learning within my planning and create the same opportunities outdoor as there is indoor. To help children connect with the outdoors and how to look after the world around them. The outdoors offers a wealth of learning opportunities and children can benefit from the knowledge I have learnt.	To incorporate outdoor learning within my planning to create fun and new learning experience for children. To develop and gain more knowledge about this subject by going on more training and then inspiring others by showing how simple it can be.	Read to gain more knowledge that can support my planning. Have planning meetings with staff to encourage and have understanding on the importance of outdoor learning in the early years. Observe and reflect on activities to see what children enjoy to be able	Finish my level 2 outdoor practitioner portfolio which will give me the certificate. I have started planning more outdoor sessions to not only support my certificate but to give me experience in leading outdoor session.

3. Skills Learn to drive	To become more independent and as my role within work is changing, it is starting to become difficult to meet the needs of my role due to me not being able to get to places without relying on others. As I am a very independent person relying on people is becoming increasing hard for me to do as I feel like I'm burdening them. So, learning to drive will help to gain a new skill but also help me have my own independence.	Find an instructor that I gel with who will support, push and give me confidence in learning a new skill. This is important to me because I am shy in certain situations and I self-doubt myself a lot. Often overthinking then convincing myself I cannot do something. I need someone that will help push me through my self-doubt and over thinking. Put money aside to be able to prioritise giving myself this as I work hard and do not give myself opportunities.	Driving instructor and price up insurance on my family car to give me extra learning opportunities.	I have given myself a year as a realistic timescale and I will be starting in the summer holidays when I have time off university and work.
4. Skills To improve my risk assessment skills spotting hazards and identifying the potential risks.	Being promoted to mobile creche coordinator it is my duty to carry out risk assessment to ensure all myself, staff and children are safe whilst creche is running. Identifying hazards takes practice	Through experience and having opportunities to keep practising this skill I want to be able to build my confidence whilst doing them. Ask line managers about extra training to be able to support	Within supervision I have mentioned I would like extra training to give me the tools needed and this was supported by my managers who are	Ongoing, as risk assessments are done daily. I would like to have extra training as soon as possible.

	and vigilance and it is a huge responsibility to have.	myself whilst doing risk assessments. Overall keeping staff and children safe a is huge priority when doing mobile creche; before I can run a creche the space has to be safe.	looking to book me on a course. There are staff that have had more experience than me who are going to take the time to help and guide me which offers me great supported network.	
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5. Values To make sure children's voices are heard.	Learning from my degree and working around children, I want children to be heard and not just seen. Their voices are just as important as an adult and they can help give us an insight on issues that affect them. Having children involved in my activities inspires me to keep planning and listening to children is a passion of mine.	Provide and give children opportunities to make choices and use their voices whenever it is possible. To encourage others on understanding the importance of listening to children and allowing them to have choices. Use open ended questions and give children my time without rushing for them to share their experiences with me. Incorporating it into daily routines so I am teaching them the importance of independence and being themselves. Further my knowledge by accessing research that supports this within early years.	Working with children I will have them help me research how to make their voices positively.	Ongoing with my role and looking into future training to help further my knowledge.

6. Values To encourage child led play.	Through observations and working with children I have learnt that children connect better with learning by being an active learner. Having opportunities to connect learning through trial and error gives children great learning opportunities.	Have the space set up in a way where children can experiment and investigate through doing. Plan opportunities to develop my learning and the children learning through play. Read and build my knowledge on this and explore extra training that can build my confidence when explaining the importance of child led play.	Where it fits within routines I will give children opportunities to lead their own play with little interference. In spare time I enjoy reading so I will look to research more and gain more knowledge to support my learning.	

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