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Element 2 Reflective log

Brief description of the activity
A group of six Year 2 children were given the task to build a den that would be big enough to hold six children. The children were provided with a variety of den making materials such as, cardboard boxes, sheets of fabric, clothes peg's and gaffer tape. The activity was carried out in the outside play area.
Aim/Objective of the activity
The class theme for the term is 'Holes, Spaces and Hiding places'. The aim was for the children to use problem-solving skills, team work and creativity to build a stable den to hold six children in the outdoor area, using the materials that was provided for them. The aim was to cover aspects from the 7 Areas of Learning outlined in the Foundation Phase Framework (Welsh Government, 2012).
Your role
The class teacher and I planned the task at the beginning of the week during our regular planning meeting. We wrote the lesson plan together using guidance from The Foundation Phase Framework. The aim, whilst planning the activity was to incorporate as many of the 7 areas of Learning as possible, whilst also using the theme for guidance. A list of equipment needed was also noted down. I collected various materials from around the school which was discussed in the planning meeting as suitable for constructing a den. My role during the activity was to introduce the task to the group of children using clear instructions outlining the aim using suitable language for the children in the group. I showed them the various materials that would be available to them and allowed them time to talk about their ideas within the group. We then discussed their ideas and I talked to the children about how to use the equipment safely. During the task I was on hand to show my encouragement and helped hold items if they needed an extra pair of hands. I also took photographs of the process and observed the group in action.
Positive aspects – why?
The children worked well as a group and were comfortable enough to ask for help when they needed it. Good communication skills between myself and the children were evident throughout the task. The enjoyment the children had during the task was also evident as they remained focused and engaged throughout. The children

conversed mainly through the medium of Welsh during the task and used mathematical terms discussing height and area to workout if the den would be big enough.
Challenging aspects – why?
The weather made the task challenging. It was a windy day and the children needed my help to hold some of the lighter materials in place whilst they attached them. I noticed that some children in the group found this frustrating.
What knowledge was demonstrated?
The guidance of the Foundation Phase Framework and how to apply it to the activity contributed to the success of the task. Knowledge gained from attending a series of Foundation Phase courses and a course on the benefits of Outdoor education had influenced the understanding of the importance of the task. Being aware of the contents of the risk assessment before and during the task ensured that the children didn't come to any harm. It was carried out in a safe environment where the children were familiar with the surroundings.
What skills were demonstrated?
Working as a team to develop the lesson plan with the class teacher. Listening to the teacher's ideas as well as contributing my own ideas and knowledge helped create successful activity. Effective communication and engagement with the children. Good communication, trust and making sure the information was shared and understood by the children was key to the activities success. Appropriate language was used to introduce the task at their level of understanding. Information sharing by making an appropriate level of observation for assessment by taking photographs and video's and noting down anything significant. Knowing how and when to share information is an essential part of delivering better provisions for pupil's. Confidentiality and security of information was taken into consideration whilst carrying out observations and recording information on pupil's.

Which values were demonstrated?

I felt that I formed a constructive relationship with the class teacher whilst planning the task and took into account her feelings values and beliefs.

I Listened to the children's ideas and opinions and valued their ideas. I showed empathy to the children when things weren't going to plan and exercised care and compassion towards the pupil's involved in the task. Offering encouragement throughout the task and boosting pupil's self-esteem.

What could have been done differently? Why?

I felt that more preparation should have been carried out prior to the practical task of building the den. A brainstorming session involving the children should have occurred, to research various types of dens and hideouts to enable them to come up with some ideas prior to the practical activity. Looking at pictures of dens and hideouts online or in books would have given the children a better understanding of what the task involved.

A back up plan should have been in place for inclement weather. A different area of the outdoor environment could have been used or even an area inside the school should have been thought of prior to the activity taking place. As it was such a windy day perhaps a different area that had more shelter could have been used making it easier for the children to complete the task without any adult intervention.

More time should have been allowed to complete the activity. I felt that I rushed the children to complete the task as we were running out of time. Better time management should be planned for in future activities.

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Element 3 – Briefing Paper

The Importance of Reflective Practice as a Means of maintaining Quality Services for Young Children

What is reflection?

Dewey (1933 cited in Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998:3) was one of the first to identify reflection as a specialised type of thinking. Dewey's ideas gave a basis concept of reflective practice which was later reinforced by Schön (1983) findings. Schön showed ways in which practitioners could think about their current knowledge and learn from their experiences. He identified two types of reflection, Reflection-on-action and Reflection-in-action.

- Reflection-On-Action – reviewing, describing, analysing and evaluating post practice with a view to improving future practice.
- Reflection-In-Action – examining experiences and responses as they occur.

Finlay (2008) suggests that with both types of reflection practitioners should aim to connect with their feelings and refer to relevant theory so that new understandings can shape their future action. Both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action allows practitioners to think about, modify and refine their expertise.

Boud et al. (1985) say that the process of reflection involves both looking back on an experience and looking forward. It involves using our new understandings and appreciations to improve on future practice. Reflection should inform and improve future action.

What is Reflective Practice?

Reflective practice is, in its simplest form, thinking about or reflecting on what you do. It is linked to the concept of learning from experience, in that you think about what you did, and what happened, and decide from that what, if anything, you could do differently next time (Cotrell, 2017).

Schon (1983) states that 'a reflective practitioner is a professional practitioner'. Reflective practice is a process of continuous knowledge construction (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Lindon and Trodda (2016) say that reflective practice has become an essential concept for high-quality Early Years practice. Practitioners should reflect on what they do with children and their families. Reflection is key in learning to be a professional and is also associated with taking responsibility, lack of complacency and with open-mindedness.

Reflective practice is an essential tool that can be used by practitioners to fulfil their role professionally. By carrying out structured reflection on their current practise practitioners can identify what change is necessary, worthwhile and valuable to their role. The main aim for reflection is it results in improvements in practice (Brodie, 2010).

Specific areas that are essential to reflective practice are noted below.

- Personal Learning
- Professional Development
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Values

How Does Reflection Enhance Quality in Early Years provision?

Effective early years practitioners are those who possess and apply specific values, qualities, knowledge and thinking to their practice which ensure they have a positive effect on the way children learn and development (Moyle et al., 2002).

In the document 'Qualified for Life' produced by the Welsh Government (2014) it says that the most effective professional development is based on reflective practice. Welsh Government (2014) encourages practitioners to take greater responsibility for their own continuous professional development. Sharing professional practice and learning from others in the profession can only enhance the quality of provision provided by practitioners to children in their care.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) also agree that an excellent professional workforce requires a good knowledge and understanding of what works for our children and young people.

Mathers et al. (2012) say that Early Years professionals need effective tools to identify their own strengths and possible areas of development so that the quality of education and care for children can be enhanced.

Reflective Models

Cottrell (2017) suggests that reflective models provide a framework that can help structure the process of Reflection.

The basic concept of every reflective model is to enable you to:

1. Think back over an experience.
2. Understand the activity at a deeper level
3. Use the understanding gained to do things differently in the future.

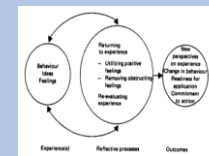
Staged Models - Most models involve stages. Each stage serves as a useful reference point for the next.

Three-stage Models

Borton (1970) and Driscoll (1994) have both developed three-staged cycles that ask:

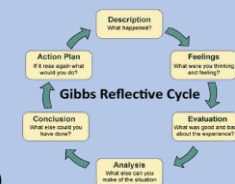
1. What? (Go back over the experience and identify what happened)
2. So What? (Describing the experience isn't enough, work out why it is significant and what do you now understand better)
3. Now What? (What will you do with the knowledge gained and how will you do things differently next time)

Multi-stage Models



Gibbs, 1988)

(Source: Bould et al., 1995)



(Source:

A model often used by Early Years practitioners is Gibbs' model of Reflection (1988). The model includes a separate stage for feelings, where as other models such as Bould et al. (1995) model doesn't have a separate stage for feelings but encourages the user to think about feelings throughout the cycle.

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Extend my knowledge of the Welsh language.	To improve my confidence in conversing in Welsh with my peers and to improve my written language skills.	Attend a Welsh sabbatical course suitable for teaching assistants.	Through Canolfan Peniaeth, which is based in the University of Wales Trinity St David.	Within the next school year.
2. Knowledge To achieve GCSE grade B in Maths, English and Science.	To be able to apply for my PGCE after finishing my degree.	Attend evening courses.	Through Coleg Sir Gar.	To start in September with an aim to sit my exams in June 2019.
3. Skills Observing and assessing children.	To be able to observe efficiently and effectively on a regular basis.	Using a timetable to focus on specific groups to improve on the quality of assessments.	During various activities in the classroom and in the outdoor environment.	With immediate effect.
4. Skills Information Sharing	Knowing how and when to share information about children and their families.	Asking advice from the senior management team and by reading documents and legislation used by the setting that I work in.	Accessing policies and documents available to me in the workplace.	Over the next school term.
5. Values Respecting Individual Rights.	So that pupils are valued and treated as individuals and treated equally.	Reading up in detail on The Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Respecting policies and procedures that have been adopted by the school.	Reading the booklet on the rights of the child and policies and procedures that are on the staff notice board in the school that I work.	Over the next half term (6 weeks).
6. Values Exercising care and compassion.	To enhance pupil's self-esteem.	Being fair and genuine and by making pupil's feel secure through implementing clear rules and routines.	Throughout my daily routine both in the cleaning environment and at break times.	With immediate effect.