

Reflection is the act of taking time away after a situation or scenario to review and think about what has happened by doing this one is able to replay the situation and think about how they acted, what they done, what was said and what the outcome was. By reflecting, it gives one the opportunity to realise their mistakes or what they have done well so they are able to develop their skills and practice in the future. Reflection can be used every day, however when critically thinking one is able to review in more depth what happened whilst using all their new knowledge of this situation to better themselves. Reflection is an important part of practice and will help develop people's knowledge in the area they are reflecting upon. As early years practitioners, reflection needs to be significant and relevant, relating to our work, children, and their families. When reflecting, one can look back at a situation and further their understanding by looking at it from another point of view and a further depth of knowledge. Brock (2015) says that reflection is the examination and development of an issue or problem and enables one to explore from different viewpoints and mindsets. This explores the point that by taking time afterwards to think about and consider different points of views and opinions, another conclusion may be made. Brock (2015) also states that reflection can improve practice. Emotion and intuition are important for doing so. The reflective practitioner must understand their intuition and act on it accordingly, intuition is a feeling rooted from one's own experiences and knowledge of patterns. They must know what comes from explicit knowledge and their tacit knowledge. Klein, G. (2018) describes explicit knowledge as facts and procedures, explicit knowledge cannot be argued against, meanwhile, tacit knowledge is formed from opinions and experience, that is hard to explain and communicate. If a practitioner had tacit knowledge about a situation, actions can be taken accordingly as tacit knowledge does not appear from nowhere, explicit knowledge however, is a more substantial evidential source of information where actions can be taken straight away. Listening to opinions and viewpoints from other students or professionals is helpful for giving each other ideas and giving people new angles to view things from. Some people may view things completely different to others, making it interesting and informative to listen to the opinions and views of others. Listening to the pinons with an open mind may widen ones own perspective and opinion on something making them want to review and assess the situation again. Schon (2016) says 'indeed, practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the mindset of action and sometimes use this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice.' Stating that practitioners use their capacity for reflection to help them in their practice, whether they have been in a similar situation they have previously reflected on and now have more knowledge and understanding on the situation, or whether they take time to reflect and form a suitable outcome for the situation.

It is important for the professional practitioner to reflect on their work, being a doctors, lawyers, or teacher. All professionals can learn from their own practice and experiences, good or bad. By taking courses or using own initiative to develop one's professional practice, they are deepening their knowledge and understanding on subjects in their profession, this is important as the professional practitioner must be competent, fully qualified, and knowledgeable in their work. Kloosterman V (no date) says "Continuing professional development (CPD) involves maintaining and enhancing the knowledge, skills and experience related to your professional activities following completion of your formal training." This is important in an early year setting as practitioners need to be able to give the children in their care the best opportunities. These should be given to them by adults who are fully knowledgeable about their profession and what the children need to reach their full development. She also states that continuing professional development should be a lifelong process to maintain and develop skills and qualities that are kept up to date. Reflection can be useful for one's professional development as the practitioner is constantly reviewing and looking back over situations to gain better understanding of them, this can help improve practice as the practitioner will reflect upon what mistakes they may have made and how they can change their actions for better outcomes and understandings. The early years practitioner may reflect upon situations with families, children, and staff to ensure they ad the best outcome, and if not, what can be changed for a better outcome next time. Reflection is vital in early years settings especially regarding situations that may involve safeguarding or whistle blowing, where the practitioner needs to use their full experience and knowledge to protect children in their care and report and record accordingly. If a safeguarding case was suspected, this would be a important time for the practitioner to reflect upon things that have happened, have been disclosed by parents/ staff or children, how it was dealt with and how it can be dealt with further whilst ensuring the best outcome for whomever it concerns.

The Gibbs Reflective Cycle created in 1988 gives a guide and structure to one's own reflection and helps with learning and working through experiences. The Reflective cycle covers six stages to apply to an experience or situation when reflecting, these are: Description where one can accurately describe the situation and understand what happened. Feelings, where they can think about what emotions they may have felt during the experience and how these may have affected it. Evaluation, this is where they can look back and think about what did and didn't work by being as truthful and unbiased as possible and looking at

both positive and negative views of the situation. Analysis, here one is able to look at the bigger picture using the details of the situation and fully understand what happened to make sense of it. Conclusion, where one can think about what they have learnt and what changes they could make to have a better outcome next time, and lastly, action plan, similar to the conclusion, however here a plan will be put in place for if the situation arose again and decide what will need to change and how the situation will improve by making changes of how they will act and do things differently for a better and improved outcome. According to the university of Edinburgh (2020) Gibbs intended for the reflective cycle to be used in repeated situations, however, it works just as well in single situations but may have a more general outcome. This reflective cycle can be used to encourage everybody to self-reflect and how to do so to get the best outcome possible, it can be used in day-to-day life or in practice.

It is important to introduce reflection into early years settings so practitioners can develop in their role and provide the best opportunities for the children in their care. What is a critical reflection? Introducing the 'What, so what, now what' model (U of G library, 2018.) explains the three stages of reflection being 'what' where one can think back on a situation, with no judgement or opinions. Stage two being 'so what?' where one can see the importance of the situation and what was learnt from this situation, and stage three, 'now what?' where one can apply their knowledge of the situation to prepare and plan for the future. They can change how they will think or act in order to develop their practice. The Empowered Educator (no date) explains the importance of encouraging children to engage in self-reflection. A suggestion is made to work alongside the children and help them self-reflect to see their perspectives and views and to make them feel confident and happy. The aim is for the children to feel comfortable asking questions, thinking about their feelings, contemplate their actions and consider the feelings of others. Some recommendations on how to introduce reflection in an early year setting whilst also making it enjoyable and engaging include PowerPoint slideshows, showing them pictures of activities and scenarios from the week and asking them different questions to encourage their reflection. Group reflection time, during this a bear/toy can be passed around giving each child the opportunity to tell the class what they or somebody else have done that was kind. Emotion cards, teaching children about their emotions is important, and relating them to self-reflection can help them understand their feelings and situations better, when using emotion cards, they can match different options with photos taken throughout the day explaining why these scenarios made them feel this way. And, weekly photo surveys, where photos of children doing indoor and outdoor activities can be taken and printed off so that the children can explain what their favourite activities were and why they enjoyed them. All these simple reflection ideas can encourage children to engage more in their self-reflection which can give them an overall better understanding of their emotions, likes and dislikes and understand how their actions make others feel. This can be useful for situations in an early years setting such as snatching toys, the practitioner can ask the child how this made them feel and why they did this, and how it made the other person feel, the practitioner can then encourage the children to come up with a solution between them, for example, giving the toy back and sharing swapping in five minutes, or finding a similar toy so they can both play together.

In summary, reflection can improve one's practice as situations can be reviewed from different points of views with a further depth of knowledge. Angles and opinions from others may also be taken on board to develop one's overall conclusion. Continuing professional development is important as a reflective practitioner a one can see where they need to improve and develop and take that on board to further their knowledge and understanding in their profession. The Gibbs reflective cycle is a good way to encourage self-reflection, by going through the six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan, these six stages help someone understand their situation and encourages them to think through these stages to gain an understanding of the outcome and how it could be different if things were done differently in the future. Practitioners can also help and encourage children at their settings to self-reflect, by using fun and engaging reflection activities in order to get them thinking and processing feelings and situations. This can support and validate them about their different emotions, and how their actions affect others and help them with situations such as snatching where they can reflect and come up with a solution of how to make the situation better.

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