

The importance of reflective practice as a professional practitioner

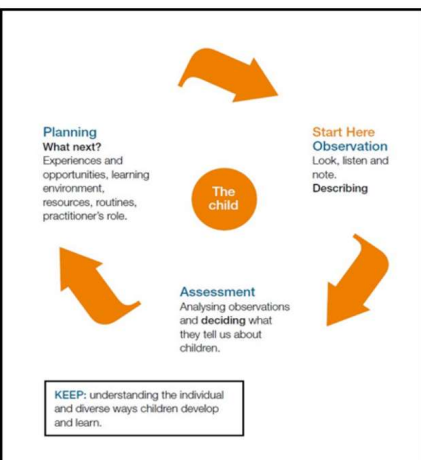
Siriol Jones 2218440

What is reflection and reflective practice?

"Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning" states Donald Schon (Sewell, 2021). Reflection is a skill that you can develop in a variety of contexts, including the classroom, the job, and general personal welfare. It can help you concentrate on making plans for upcoming experiences and has many advantages on both a personal and professional level (Sewell, 2021). It is a natural human trait to reflect on the past. However, reflective practice differs from casual thinking in that it calls for conscious effort to reflect on experiences and gain new understanding from them (SkillsYouNeed, 2011). You will most certainly find reflective practice helpful as a professional practitioner once you get into the habit of doing it (SkillsYouNeed, 2011). Reflective practice is extremely helpful in improving one's knowledge of others and one's own self-awareness, which is a crucial element of emotional intelligence. This supports active participation in work processes and can aid in the development of creative thinking abilities (SkillsYouNeed, 2011). According to Schön (1983), it is critical to look back and see "how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unforeseen outcome." The process of reflection-on-action should inspire suggestions for future improvements.

Reflection within the early years setting

As states (Lorina, 2015) reflective practice is the process of learning from the challenges and worries that arise frequently while working with young children. It requires reflecting back on both what happened and why. It also influences how we make decisions. It encourages us to evaluate many aspects of the experiences we provide in order to make decisions about what needs to be repeated, expanded upon, or changed. This helps us to advance and widen the learning of the children and to build on their existing knowledge and abilities (Lorina, 2015). Building positive relationships with children and parents or guardians is such an important aspect of working in the early years setting. By creating these positive relationships you are helping the children's learning by making them feel safe and secure whilst working with the parents or guardians to make sure each individual's needs are met (Early Years Matters Ltd, 2022). (Mark Allen Group Company, 2017) also state that reflection is not only a personal process it is also essential to reflect as part of a team in the early years setting. Reflecting as part of a team ensures that you can give and receive feedback and to learn to ensure the highest quality of care and learning of children in the early years (Mark Allen Group Company, 2017).



The importance of observation in the early years setting

According to (Daniel Rosa, 2015) a child's development and learning are supported by observation, assessment, and planning. Planning begins with observation of the children in order to comprehend and take into account their present interests, growth, and learning. Observation is the practice of maintaining a close eye on, listening to, and documenting what we see and hear from the children in our care (Daniel Rosa, 2015). By analysing our observations and deciding what the children are telling us, we evaluate their progress. In order to determine the children's requirements, interests, present development, and learning, we must also learn about their parents' childcare and educational demands. We plan ahead for the progression of the learning and growth of the children. We need to base a lot of this on our observations, evaluations, and information from parents in addition to what we know through our own observations and assessments (Daniel Rosa, 2015). We are aware of the positive effects that collaboration between parents and early years practitioners has on the growth and learning of young children and also the importance of the observation process of observing an individual child. Both individuals have a lot to offer each other in terms of sharing and learning (Early Years Matters Ltd, 2022). Understanding and respecting the many responsibilities that each person performs is the first step in working together to truly comprehend and address a child's particular requirements. Building connections based on mutual respect and trust as well as exchanging knowledge and skills are all part of the process. To ensure that knowledge and experience are exchanged across partners, communication is necessary. The child, who always comes first, is at the centre of all partnerships (Early Years Matters Ltd, 2022).

(Daniel Rosa, 2015)

Models and theories of reflection

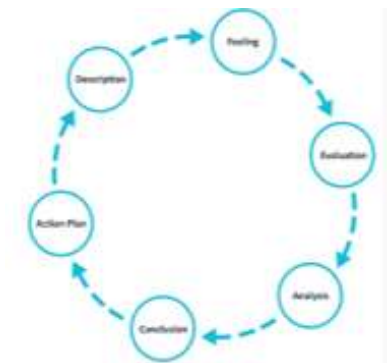
(The University of Edinburgh, 2020) state that there are many different types of models and theories of reflection. One of these being Graham Gibbs. Gibbs created the Gibbs Reflective Cycle in 1988 to structure learning from experiences. It provides a framework for analysing events and, given that it is continuous, accommodates itself particularly well to repeated encounters, allowing you to draw lessons and make plans from both positive and negative situations (The University of Edinburgh, 2020). Although Gibbs initially recommended using it in repetitive situations, the stages and principles also hold true for one-time events. If the action plan is created for a standalone event, it may become more general and focus on how you may use your conclusions moving forward (The University of Edinburgh, 2020).

The concepts of "reflection in action" and "reflection on action" are presented by the Schön reflective model (Nursing Answers, 2021). Donald Schon defined reflection as a professional's capacity to "consider what they are doing as they are doing it." Schon claims that being able to think quickly and adapt to changing situations is necessary for managing the uncertain areas of professional activity (Nursing Answers, 2021). This is crucial, and reflection-in-action is necessary in the early years setting. (Nursing Answers, 2021). You will approach your practise as a professional practitioner with a questioning attitude if you adhere to Schon's concept of reflection. You will also reflect on both why and how things could be different. Evaluate your own practice's strengths and potential growth areas while asking yourself why learning experiences might be this way and thinking about how to improve them is essential as a professional practitioner Schon believes. According to (Nursing Answers, 2021) as a result, everything you do will be well thought out, supported by research and prior knowledge, laser-focused, and motivated by reason. As with all reflective models, it's crucial to go through the cycle again to ensure that learning is retained and progress is made.

(Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2022) states that David Kolb's learning cycle enables you to structure a piece of reflective writing around four distinct stages; experience, reflect, conceptualise and apply. Experiential learning describes Kolb's reflective model. Our own experience serves as the foundation for this model, which is then methodically reviewed, analysed, and assessed over the course of three steps. The new experiences will serve as the foundation for a new cycle after this one is finished (Brown, 2015).

Conclusion

To conclude it is proposed that one can start their path of reflection by using the strategies mentioned above. When working in childcare settings, reflection is a critical ability for all practitioners to have. By reflecting as a practitioner, you can ensure that every child receives the best care and education possible. Reflection is a useful tool for improving one's knowledge and for developing one's career. As a method to understand children, their developmental stage, their needs, as well as a way to determine their likes and dislikes, practitioners might utilize reflection in the workplace. Whilst researching the importance of reflective practice as a professional practitioner I have learnt new information that I can use within my work as a professional practitioner to ensure that I am giving the upmost care and attention to the children in my care and also different learning strategies that I can use within my practice.



(The University of Edinburgh, 2020).



(Nursing Answers, 2021).



(Brown, 2015).

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