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Elfen 2 Log adfyfyriol – Element 2 Reflective log

Disgrifiad byr o'r gweithgaredd (dim mwy na 50 o eiriau) Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words) The activity involved children making their own potions from natural ingredients from around a small woodland area. The children were allowed to explore the area using magnifying glasses, magnifying pots and spoons. The children were taught about their different senses and improving their knowledge, skills and understanding about outdoor woodland environments.
Nod/Amcan y gweithgaredd Aim/Objective of the activity The aim of this activity was for children to use and acknowledge their senses. They were given opportunities to use sight, smell, hearing and touch. The children would be touching and feeling the mud, trees and other natural materials in the woodland, developing their fine motor skills and sensory development. Gross motor skills were exercised when using their balance and co-ordination to walk around on the uneven ground and walking up to the woodland area on steep and narrow pathways. The children were to learn about what animals live in the woods, what sounds they could hear and also all about the different natural materials. Another aim was to improve the children's listening skills, to enable them to listen to all the sounds around them and to listen when I was talking. Communication skills were encouraged for the children to talk together and share their experiences and views and to also build children's confidence to speak in front of a group to express their ideas and views about what they could hear and see.
Eich rôl chi Your role Preparing the activity – equipment in place. Undertake a Risk Assessment. Carrying First Aid Kit. Safety – informing the children of safety in relation to not drinking the potions; disposal of potions; safety in the woods and sticking to the boundaries. Photographic records for the children's topic books. Leading the activity: • Encourage the children to engage. • Explain the activity. • Encourage the children to use all their senses. • Ask questions about the activity. • Encourage children to describe their potions.
Agweddau cadarnhaol – pam? Positive aspects – why? Participation: all the children enjoyed exploring the natural woodland environment and took part in the activity. The children were all enthusiastic and very excited about being up in the woods and when asked to find natural ingredients to make their potions all the children got stuck in, looking through the soil and leaves. When they found insects, they would get very excited and put them into the magnifying pots for all the children to see. Communication: all the children communicated with each other throughout the activity. They showed friends what they had found and what they could see. Part of the activity was to allow their friends to smell the potion they had made and tell the children what name they had chosen for their potion. All the children went around one another showing off their potions very enthusiastically and proudly. Even children who are shy joined in and shared their potions with other children.

Leadership: I ensured that I was enthusiastic about the activity and made sure all the children had an equal chance to express their views and opinions. New Experiences: The woodland area where the activity took place is a new area that has been built by the school. The children have not had many experiences up in the woods so the children were all very excited about going up to the woods and doing the activity and they thrived in this environment and enjoyed exploring. We had plenty of time to complete the activity so the children had enough time to explore the environment fully. The children were not rushed so they could relax and enjoy the activity.
Agweddau heriol – pam? Challenging aspects – why?
Large Numbers: I had too many children in a group. The groups of children were very big and it was hard at times to maintain all the children's attention. Unsuitable Groupings: Within one group I had a large group of lower ability children who struggle to listen and have low attention spans. As the group was too big, it was difficult to give each of these children the support they needed to get involved in the activity and understand what they had to do. Because of this they did not fully listen to instructions and got easily distracted. I became very stressed as I felt I was repeating myself and getting very frustrated with these children. Boundaries: Although the woodland area offers great opportunities to children, the space is not that big and has steep banks. Because the space was limited for the children they then kept going past the boundaries I had set for them. I had told the children about the boundaries but some children kept going beyond them, which resulted in me becoming very frustrated.
Pa wybodaeth arddangoswyd? What knowledge was demonstrated?
I have had previous woodland training which helped me to assist the class teacher to arrange and put together the activity for the children. It expanded my knowledge and understanding about the benefits that a woodland experience would give to children. The knowledge from this training helped me to provide the children with an active learning experience outdoors which encouraged not only the children but also myself to appreciate nature. I have completed my First Aid training which came into use when a child fell over and scraped their knee. I was able to deal with the situation calmly whilst reassuring the child. I undertook the correct procedure using the First Aid bag for the appropriate dressings and wipes.
Pa sgiliau arddangoswyd? What skills were demonstrated?
Organisation: I was well prepared for the activity and had all the equipment I needed before starting. I ensured I had enough equipment for each child so that they could all take part. Communication: I showed good communication skills with the children. I engaged the children and spoke clearly about the activity. Leadership: I showed leadership skills when undertaking the activity to the groups of children. This has given me confidence to undertake leadership in future activities. I feel I lead the activity well and that the children were engaged and enjoyed the activity.

<i>Pa werthoedd arddangoswyd?</i> Which values were demonstrated? Diversity and equality: I treated every individual child with respect and equality. I made time to listen and speak with all of the children in the group and treated them all fairly. I made myself approachable to the children so that they could feel that they could ask me questions and feel at ease in my presence. A value I could have shown more of was patience. I felt I could have been more patient with certain children within the group and given them more of an opportunity to join in and listen on a more of a one-to-one basis. This could have improved their listening skills.
<i>Beth allai cael ei wneud yn wahanol? Pam?</i> What could have been done differently? Why? Smaller groups would have made the activity more manageable. Smaller groups would have helped to improve listening skills and the chance for me to give more support to each child. Smaller groups would have helped the children of lower ability to concentrate and listen better as I could have provided more one to one support. Group Dynamics: It could have helped to have had mixed ability groups instead of having had all the lower ability children in the same group which was difficult and stressful. Smaller mixed ability groups would make it easier to be more patient with certain children within the group and improve communication. Boundaries: Some of the children kept going beyond the boundaries. Next time I will physically show the children the boundaries and be clearer about where not to go. I felt that I was not clear enough and should have explained the rules more clearly. I could have used an alerting word such as 'quick circle' and count up to ten to get the children to come together. This could have improved their listening skills.

Element 3 Briefing Paper

The importance of reflective practice in the early years.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is a process of reflecting and studying on experiences or situations to improve professional practice. Reflecting helps to identify what has happened in a situation and what could have been improved (Hallet, 2013). Reflection helps practitioners to critically and creatively think about their own professional practice to improve outcomes for children. It helps to evaluate practice to identify strengths and areas for development (Welsh Government, 2015).

Why is reflective practice important?

- Reflective practice is important according to Kay (2012) to be able to review and analyse the work that is done with children and to acknowledge how best to contribute to their experiences and development.
- There is significant importance according to Hallet (2013) for practitioners to be reflective in the continuously changing environment within the early years in order to maintain integrated working with young children. This requires a sensitive and reflective approach. The purpose of reflective practice is to provide children and their families with better quality experiences and to improve provision and practice.
- The Foundation Phase provides children with experiences to be creative and imaginative through a play-based curriculum, learning from practical activities provided by practitioners. Therefore, throughout the curriculum, practitioners should allow time to include reflection in their practice as it develops a better understanding about how children learn, about child development and how to meet the needs of all children. The Foundation Phase also states the need for sharing good practice and reflecting on up to date educational research as it is a key part of professional self-development and can encourage pedagogical knowledge. It also provides understanding into the skills of each practitioner along with the quality of provision within the setting to be able to deliver the best learning experiences through the seven areas of learning (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008).
- According to Pacey (2016) continually reflecting on practice will help practitioners to enhance professional skills and become more confident and motivated within practice. It also helps to identify professional development and provides support to set targets. Although, according to Lindon and Trodd (2016), some practitioners feel vulnerable about being criticised and believe that reflective practice is about finding fault. Reflective practice should highlight strengths along with suggested ways of improvement. Practitioners should remember that any form of criticism that is received, should be analysed to find ways to learn from the experience.
- McFarland et al. (2009) suggests that by examining reflective practice more regularly, these practitioners will have greater ideas about how to improve their skills and practice for self-development and for children's learning. By promoting new ideas into practice, it will result in more effective strategies for children and their education.

Models of reflection.

Models of reflection or frameworks for reflection are a structured guide to help practitioners reflect in the best way possible. There is no right model of reflection and practitioners should choose one that is appropriate to be able to learn from the experience (The University of Nottingham, No Date).

Donald Schon- His reflective model consists of two stages reflection in action, which means learning whilst doing, and reflection on action, where learning is done after an experience. These two stages provide practitioners with useful ways to think about reflective practice in early years settings (Craft and Paige-Smith, 2007). John Dewey's opinions on reflection are very similar to that of Schon's as they both view reflection as a process of problem solving where reflection starts when practitioners identify issues within their provision (Hallet, 2013). An online article by Dimova and Kamarska (2015) says that Donald Schon enriched Dewey's ideas of reflection where reflective thinking is related to action. Reflection is realised during and after an experience, therefore two forms of reflection can occur within the reflective process.

Graham Gibbs- His reflective model has six stages of reflection and presents the process of reflection as a cycle that can be worked through. The six stages include:

- Description - What happened?
- Feelings - What was being felt during the experience?
- Evaluation - What was good and bad about the experience?
- Analysis - What sense can be made from the experience?
- Conclusion - What else could have been done?
- Action plan - What would be done differently next time? (Kay, 2012).

The Gibbs cycle is another useful way to think through all the stages of an activity or experience with children to enhance critical thinking and development (Early Years Careers, 2015).

How to become a reflective practitioner?

- Professional development involves practitioners exploring their own practice and the practice of others, and critically examining ways in which to improve and develop practice for children. Being able to critically reflect enables practitioners to develop professionally and personally (Craft and Paige-Smith, 2007).
- When undertaking an activity or experience with children, start to question and think about the situation. Keep a professional journal to record thoughts and ideas about own practice which will help to raise any specific issues or questions that needs to be developed to progress practice further (Lindon and Trodd, 2016). Kay (2012) thinks that reflective practice is about practitioners taking responsibility for own actions as this is part of the growing process in reflection.
- Have support from other practitioners within the setting. Having support from others according to Karban and Smith (No Date), helps practitioners to become more self-aware and be able to share ideas to extend reflection. Working with other practitioners develops capacity for critical reflection by sharing and comparing ideas to reflect on an experience with children.

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Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
Knowledge To improve and enhance my Welsh language.	To enable me to use more Welsh language within my setting. To be able to feel confident to speak Welsh with others and also to encourage and promote children's Welsh language in practice.	To attend Welsh courses or classes.	To ask within my setting of any Welsh courses I could attend. To attend night classes where available.	To complete next year.
Knowledge To learn Sign Language.	To learn Sign Language to be able to use within my setting with children with Autism and a child who is partly deaf. To also use at home with my young brother who has no communication.	To attend Sign Language courses or classes that are available.	To ask the SENCO of my setting for courses available. Ask my brother's Key Worker for any courses available.	When the next course is available.
Skills Communication skills.	To improve my communication with practitioners and parents in the setting. To develop more confidence in sharing information and own views and opinions within practice.	To talk with a teacher in school who can advise and support me. To observe a practitioner promoting good communication skills with a parent or other colleagues.	To speak with a teacher or practitioner in my setting.	A continuous review.

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
Skills Organisation	To become better organised when preparing and undertaking activities with children. To organise and be better prepared for my university assignments. To allow more time to complete the assignments.	To talk with class teacher for support and advice about being better prepared for activities. To refer to academic skills handbook to read up about how to become more organised. To organise my time more efficiently to complete and prepare assignments.	To talk to lecturers and practitioners in my setting about any worries or concerns I have. To look online at academic skills handbook or go to university library for academic skills books.	A continuous development plan. To review in 6 months.
Values To have more patience.	To have more patience when working with children. To not get so frustrated when children do not listen.	To attend the Incredible Years course to learn about different positive behaviour strategies to use with children.	To speak with practitioners within my setting to be put onto the course.	When the next course is available.
Values To gain self-confidence.	To be able to have more confidence in myself and to deliver this into my professional practice. To feel more confident undergoing my degree, so I can complete my final year.	To speak with practitioners and lectures about concerns to gain support. To think about strategies to deal with my anxiety's and nerves.	To speak with practitioners in my setting and lecturers in university.	A continuous review.

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