

The purpose of this poster is to discuss the significance of reflective practice to aid professional development in early years. This poster will also support practitioners to develop an understanding of reflective practice and its value in providing quality service provisions. It will be facilitated with theoretical frameworks, models, and references.

What is Reflection?

HSPC (2021) states reflection ‘is a process which helps you gain insight into your professional practice by thinking analytically about any element.’ Reflection allows people to develop insight and learn from mistake and think of ways that it can be made better next time. HSPC (2021) believes that reflection ‘can also lead to developments and improvements for both the professionals and their service users.’ According to Schon (quoted in Aubrey and Riley,2019, p. 181-194). Reflection in practice and reflection on practice. By carrying out reflection in practice practitioners are reflecting whilst in the situation. Schon believes that by professional practitioners carrying out reflection in practice there may be a risk that one could miss opportunities to reflect and evaluate in order to improve their knowledge and future planning. Whereas reflection on practice is a higher level of reflection

Why is Reflection important?

Reflection is important as it can allow continuous development of the person, policies and procedures, this allows organisations to meet the needs of families. Reflection is also important because it allows you to analyse feelings and weaknesses.

Reflection and Reflective Practice also benefits the parents and carers, it also allows the practitioner to benefit professionally and personally as it supports practitioners to continually improve. (PACEY, 2016)

Once reflection takes place this can then be seen in the practice, therefore allowing people to notice and experience the changes due to reflection which then provides evidence to OFSTED and other inspectors. (PACEY, 2016)

What is Reflective Practice?

The University of Glasgow (2018) states that reflective practice is a process of critical evaluation and self-assessment whereby explores an event in order to learn from experiences. They also suggest reflective practice enhances professionalism and encourages self-directed learning; this then allows the continuation of professional development.

Dewey (1933) developed a conceptual framework for thinking about reflection that can be summarised as: Reflection in action and Reflection on action.

Being a reflective practitioner

Reed and Canning (2010) suggest that how can ‘practitioners aspire to be effective change agents within their professional roles and contribute to the process of ensuring positive outcomes for children if we do not understand who we are, how can we support others within our communities of practice.’ Tarrant (2013) Suggests that practitioners have responsibility to provide the best care for their service users. If Practitioners apply reflective practice within their work, it allows them to develop their practice as they are able to see their own strengths and weaknesses to better their facilities for children and their families. Brock (2014) suggests that in order for reflection to be effective it needs to be meaningful to their practice and the children that are within their practice.

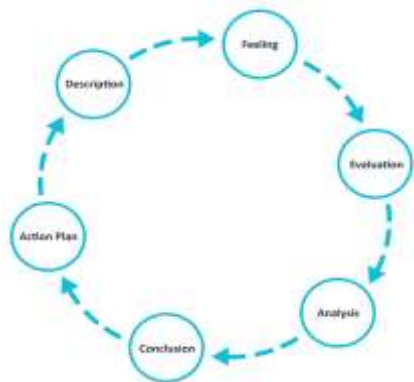
PACEY (2016) suggest that as an early year’s professional you want to provide the best care you can and therefore Reflective practice is a good way to maintain and improve the quality care being provided by the practice. They state that a reflective practitioner ‘celebrates strengths and acknowledges the areas that needs developing, takes responsibility for constantly improving quality of their practice, considers the impact of their practices on children and their families and plans how they can develop and maintain their practice.

After the professional practitioner conducts reflection a couple of times it begins to be a natural part of their daily routine this allows them to think about what went well and how they can change what didn’t go too well. A way in which a practitioner can reflect could be that they have designated an activity for a child that day and while observing the child they notice something didn’t go quite how they expected it to therefore they reflect and think of a way to improve it.

Models of Reflective Practice

To support Reflective Practice there are many different models developed that can be used to help a practitioner reflect. Each model is different however they all allow support for reflection.

The first model of reflection is by Gibbs (1988) who in his model clarifies that reflective practice allows practitioners to reflect on their normal way of thinking allowing them to improve themselves and their practice.



University of Edinburgh, 2020

Gibbs (1998) model of reflection is made up of six different components, these being the Description of the situation, analyse the feelings, Evaluation of the experience, Analysis this allows practitioners to make sense of the experience, Conclusion to reflect on the situation to see what could be changed if the situation was to arise again and finally Action Plan. This is one of the most famous reflective processes used by practitioners in order to reflect on their services and allow quality service provisions for service users.

Another Reflective Model that practitioners find useful to use in reflective practice is Kolb's (1984) model of reflection, it is also known as The Kolb Cycle or The Experiential Learning Cycle. Kolb's cycle contains four different stages of learning. These are known as Experience, Reflect, Conceptualise and Apply (Cardiff Metropolitan University, ND). Experience is the first stage of the cycle, this is where practitioners think about the situation, the feelings from the situation this allows a platform for the reflection. Next is Reflect, this is where practitioners ask themselves what went well? What can I change for next time? Then Conceptualise, this is where practitioners think about why the experience went the way it did this is deeper reflection. Finally Apply, this is where the plan is made due to the reflection.

These Models are seen as useful to practitioners, however according to the University of Cambridge (2021) they suggest that there are pros and cons to these models of reflection. Some pros include providing a starting point if a practitioner is unsure where to begin in their process of reflective practice, they also allow a pathway through reflection as they are a guide which allows practitioners to understand the pathways to reflect in order to improve their practice. However, although models of reflection provide guidance and help, they also come with some cons, these include making practitioners believe that these steps must be followed in a particular order in order for their practice to see results. The model of reflection also suggests that they apply to every situation, however they may need to be adapted as every situation is different and is a process that should be carried out in order to improve.

Theory

Schon suggest that practitioners are only reflective when they use their experiences, their knowledge and their understanding. Schon developed their theory by suggesting practitioners within their workplace deal with unexpected situations which then reveals their reflecting ability in order to make changes to their services to provide quality service provisions. Brock (2014) states that tacit knowledge is developed from knowledge gained through experience with working with children as well as training. When working with children and building up relationship's practitioners get to know children's personalities and their needs. They are therefore able to recognise when maybe "something is not quite right" with a child although they may not be able to explain why as it is through their tacit knowledge.

Reflective Account Forms

Reflective Account forms are used within practice to allow practitioners to reflect on their experiences and the ways that they can improve for next time and what went well within practice to maintain quality service provisions. Reflective account documents allow practitioners to follow their reflection step by step and put detailed evaluative brief notes on an activity. Reflective account forms are also useful as they will allow you to look back on in the future to see the progress made and what could still be improved on within the professional practice.

This is an example of a Reflective Account form.

NMC (2021)

In Conclusion it stated that reflection is a crucial and large part of being a professional practitioner. It is stated by the HSPC (2021) that reflection can lead to development both personally and professionally. Reflection can be seen as important as it allows the development of the professional practice which then allows the community to develop from the quality service provisions in place within their local community as suggested also by PACEY (2016)

Due to reflection being an important part of being a professional practitioner it is suggested that reflection should become part of a practitioner's daily routine, as this allows a practitioner to look back on their day and the activities that took place and see what went well and what they could improve on next time to ensure that the best result possible comes out for their service users. They state reflective practice is a way to also celebrate the strengths and weaknesses of an achievement that they may need to improve on later down the line.

It is also suggested by many theorists that reflection is essential in developing quality service provisions, this is also assisted with the models of reflection created by Kolb and Gibbs. These encourage practitioners that reflection is an essential part of practice and developing professionally this allows professional development to be continue. Theorists such as Brock (2014) believes in tactic knowledge which helps a practitioner to develop as they are able to acknowledge if something isn't 'quite right' with a child and therefore their observation skills have developed which then allows them to reflect upon the day and see that they have developed a quality service provision and developed personally within their practice.

It can also be seen that reflective practice is important as a professional practitioner as the models of reflection show. These were developed by theorists to show the process needed in order to fully reflect upon an experience in the workplace as they provided step by step what you should reflect on each time and a section where they can explain how they will develop next time. This can be seen in Gibb's reflective model (1998) and Kolb's reflective models (1984).

Similarly, to being able to see their own reflection there are reflective account forms these allow practitioners to make brief notes on their experience and analyse them which they will then be able to change for their next activity to provide quality services to their users.

Overall, it is suggested that all the methods above are valuable and effective ways to reflect. Reflection can be seen as a valuable and key skill within these professions to ensure that practitioners and their providers are providing high quality care. Reflection allows service providers to ensure professional development is continued within their workplace. It also aids practitioners to understand children that they will work with on a day-to-day basis as this will allow them to find out their likes and dislikes and help them plan future activities which they can use to aid their development, therefore reflection is an important part of being a professional practitioner.

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