

I am a HLTA working in a Primary School supporting Year 6 and teaching PSHE lessons. I have recently gained certificates for courses on autism and learning difficulties. I have been preparing RWI resources and creating lesson plans for PSHE lessons across the school.				ECEY4009/C 2312292 Word count 537
Objective	Actions	Resources	Target date for achieving objective	Success criteria
Complete Level 3 in British Sign Language.	I have already gained a level 2 in British Sign Language. To gain my level 3 I will study and watch the content of the videos available and practise signing whilst viewing to help my fluency within sign language.	I will continue the course material and practise memorising by doing exercises repetitively. Level 3 has more conversation exercises so practise is essential. I will reach out to a friend who is deaf to develop my conversation skills within signing, hoping to rectify any mistakes made.	June 2024	I will be able to finish the course, and complete my final assessment with confidence. I will gain level 3 certificate in BSL as recognition of my achievement. I will continue to use my sign language and implement my learnings within my class helping others develop their skills.
Research and implement the Thrive approach in my school.	I am interested in the Thrive approach that we currently use at my school. I will do some reading and research into the approach the school takes and liaise with current practitioners at my school. I will observe a Thrive session. I will ask my Headteacher if funding is available for me to train and gain practitioner status.	I will research through books and online articles about social and emotional wellbeing and make notes to gain information and help with my understanding. I will again meet with peers to share ideas. I will attend online courses relating to Thrive or other social/emotional courses.	December 2023	I will be more informed on the approach and will be able to use my knowledge to improve the mental health and wellbeing with the children I support and even be able to take my studies to help others outside a classroom environment within everyday life.
To gain confidence presenting a course to adults.	I will need to present an induction programme to newly appointed Teaching Assistants with the EAS. Previously I have delivered this training within my school but next time it will be to a wider audience in schools across South Wales.	I will need to attend a planning meeting beforehand to familiarise myself with the most recent programme. I need to contribute my ideas during these meetings.	Ongoing	I will be able to present myself without unnecessary shyness or nerves. I will feel more confident to contribute to discussions.
To develop my Welsh Language skills.	I am not a Welsh speaker so I have been learning alongside the children in my class. I have picked up some incidental welsh and am able to use some good phrases.	I will communicate with the Welsh lead in my school for some personal tutoring. I have downloaded the Duolingo app and have been completing this daily to improve.	Ongoing	I will be able to keep up in lessons and speak confidently. If I'm needed to cover a Welsh lesson I will be able to deliver with confidence.

What is reflection and what is reflective practise?

According to Dewey (1933) reflection is a thought process that is actively developed as a purposeful action. Although he is an original theorist, his views are still relevant in today's world. He believed that by being curious and asking questions made you aware that you could implement change into your practice.

This is supported by Schon (1991) who states that reflection is knowledge in action to engage a process of learning. It is thinking about experiences, considering situations and learning from them for the future.

Lindon (2016) summarises that reflective practice is an important professional and personal mindset to develop. This can take time for practitioners to develop in their practice and may need several tries before coming familiar with the approach. When successfully implemented, it allows you to share experiences, knowledge and seeing things in a different way. This then leads to evaluation of what you have put in place to then begin reflection again.

Brock (2010) suggests when practitioners reflect they gain professional knowledge and understanding which then identifies ways to change practice and to improve in areas of personal or professional development. This allows the practitioner to enhance problem solving skills by thinking and questioning to improve their practice. Learning from reflective practice will address challenges and improve decision making.

Why is reflective practise important to Early Years practise?

Hallet (2013) explains that working in Early Years is a process of continuous change where you need to keep up to date with changing policies and practices. The importance of reflection is part of several core documents making it essential that practitioners improve practice through reflection.

It is important for Practitioners to change their practice and focus on the child's perspective and how they learn (Schon). This is supported by Gibbs (1999) who explains reflection using a mirror metaphor. He says that reflection is looking at different perspectives. The practitioner would be seeing things from a child's view and would be able to plan or change practice to reflect this.

Paige-Smith (2011) also states that practitioners working together provide opportunities to share perspectives and compare thoughts. This can be helpful for interactions with multi agency professionals. Reflection is therefore an important part of practice and will benefit the children in your setting along with their parents and carers. Being reflective will support you to maintain and continually improve your practice. There are several benefits to children's development as their individual needs are met, self-esteem increased and their environment will be appropriate with suitable resources and opportunities to learn. Parents will also feel confident in your ability as they will see high quality care provided for their child that is constantly improving.

The theory of reflective practise

Schon (1987) states that to reflect on and in action is important for continuous learning to happen. His theory is relevant to professionals in their everyday practise. He believes that reflection in action was a way of learning through an experience, deciding how to act at the time and acting immediately. Often people who reflect in action are experienced practitioners who use their knowledge to make decisions quickly. Reflection on action is exploring an experience after the event has taken place. This leads to questioning what you could do differently next time and using the information gained to inform and process actions and feelings.

Dewey (1910) explored relationship between reflective thinking and learning and says that reflection is part of people's thought processes that need developing. He concentrates his theory on thinking, problem solving and reasoning. Although his research was over a century ago, it is still very relevant today in our ever-changing world. He believed that being reflective was a routine action, doing something without thinking and experiences. As well as asking questions, being curious, and implementing change.

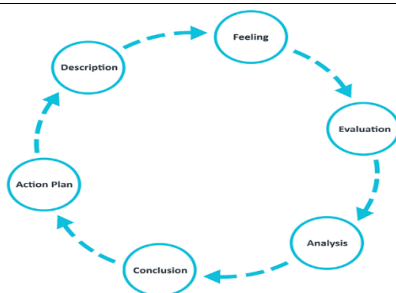


Figure 1: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1998)

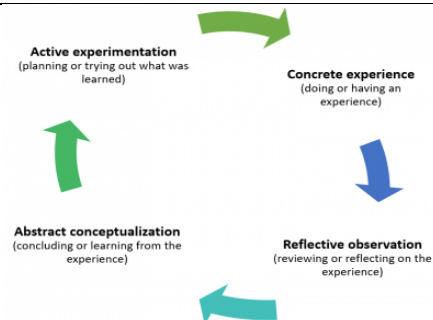


Figure 2: Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning (1984)

Analysis of models

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle builds on other theorists' model but adds more stages. It is a more complex model as it gives questions to think about during the cycle however the stages can act as a guide to reassure along the way. This is similar to Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning but it adds personal reflection allowing you to acknowledge your personal feelings of the experience which may influence your reflection. These feelings can be considered during and after the experience. Similarly, you would reflect on the experience at the evaluation stage but not only your feelings, but those of others. As with Kolb, there is an analysing stage where you will dig deeper to make sense of the experience. With the conclusion stage Gibbs' model gives you questions to emphasise how to improve next time and then begin an action plan to make changes to your practice and question what you will do differently next time based on your previous thoughts. However, this model makes assumptions over experiences and following the cycle may not suit everyone because of this. This may be more suited as a starting point for people new to reflection.

Kolb uses a four-stage model which allows you to reflect and draw on conclusions after an experience or event. Firstly, there will be a concrete experience which causes you to reflect or a new idea to test out. Next, will be a reflective observation where you will question the experience. Then, during abstract conceptualisation you will analyse your reflections further. This is done by connecting previous actions with your own knowledge to draw a conclusion and decide if change is needed. Finally, you can actively put your reflections into practice to try out new ideas to different situations. Kolb's model helps integrate theory and practice where you feel, watch, think and do and applies learning to new situations. However, it doesn't take into consideration that practitioners have different styles of learning and there is no room to accommodate these in the cycle.

Conclusion

Many models of reflection are similar and follow the same themes. Each model has a slightly different approach and can contain a different number of steps. Some models are more complex than others with the theorists explaining in depth. Reflective models are a structure to follow and provide a start and end point but some reflections may not always have a starting point to begin.

Reflection is a personal process and it's about finding one to best suit your experiences. You may have to try several models before finding one that fits your situation. By being a reflective practitioner, you will develop your skills which leads to improving your practice.