

Reflective Practice

What is reflection and reflective practice?

Reflective Practice - "...the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning..." (Schon 1983:102-104). Reflection is a process which helps you gain insight and knowledge. According to health and care professions council (2021) the insights viewed, and lessons learned should be applied in order to maintain good professional practice. As a result, professionals can openly discuss our practice and ways to improve in order for each individual to progress and enhance their knowledge. Professionals should open themselves up for feedback from others. Donald Schon believed that there were two types of reflection reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. As stated by Slessor et al (2022) Reflection-in-action is the process that allows professionals to re structure the activity they are working on whilst it is being carried out. Reflection-in-action allows professionals to gain a new understanding of the experience and adapt to deal with change. Reflection-on-action is reflecting on an experience after it has occurred. The professional questions why the child acted as they did and what could have been handled differently. Reflection-on-action is usually written down a negative to this would be the practitioner not being able to recall everything that was said. The university of Cambridge (No Date) states that there is no one correct way to reflect it is completely down to the individual.

Benefits of reflective practice

Reflecting on practice is extremely beneficial for both teachers and students according to Reflective Teaching Journal (2022). Reflecting can promote professional growth as a result you will have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Practitioners can also note down their goals and adjust their teaching accordingly. Reflective practice can help to facilitate teaching. Professional practitioners strive to learn all of their pupils' names and provide them with a safe and secure working environment. Reflective practice helps to ensure that all students are developing their skills from the learning experience. Reflective practice can help to boost the teach-student relationship. As stated by reflective teaching journal (2022) it is important to cultivate positive individual relationships with your students. Reflective practice can also help to make your lessons more interesting for the children. As a practitioner you should implement the changes based on your reflection in order to engage the children. Reflection enhances problem solving skills as you have to learn how to solve the problems and challenges you are met with. Every child is different and therefore, you have to approach and talk to them in a way that best meets their individual needs. Students can improve their performance when given time to reflect in the classroom after an activity has been carried out. (Teaching journal 2022) and (Skills you need 2022).

How do we apply reflective practice in early years settings?

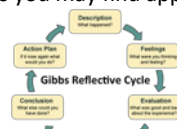
As a professional practitioner it is useful to reflect in pairs or sometimes groups with other practitioners in order to combine one another's strengths. When reflecting practitioners can support each other to improve and better themselves. This helps to ensure that the working environment remains a positive place for both the staff members and children. In many settings practitioners observe each other completing activities with the children to give them instant feedback and reflect together. Hallet (2013) believes that by reflecting with other colleagues, parents, and children we are able to include the ability to problem solve and find solutions, reason, give constructive feedback and also receive feedback from others in order for us to then think in a reflective way and improve our provision and practice. Furthermore, reflecting with a wide range of people and age groups gives you the experience to adapt the way you talk and the terms you use in order to fulfil the individual's needs. Communication is key as it helps to build understanding and trust. Practitioners, children, and parents should all communicate in order to receive a well-balanced reflection. A good line of communication with parents results in forming a professional relationship the child will then observe this relationship and become more trusting in you. When observing and reflecting on a child it is important to involve the parents or caregivers. Therefore, the caregivers are able to reflect at home and observe if the child's behaviour and ability matches the early years setting. (Kennedy, 2018). Dewey (1910, p.6) stated that reflective practice refers to 'the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'. This means that you will have to question the approach and consider why the situation occurred the way it did. It is useful to seek support from other professional practitioners in order to gain a second opinion.

Reflection within professional practice

As a practitioner I realise that it is Important to reflect on my own practice in order to improve and develop skills through experience. As I professional you should strive to develop all learners and colleagues so that everyone around you is doing their best. It is important to support and encourage others. When reflecting it is important to see beyond the classroom and analyse the children's home lives. In order to be professional, you must be mindful and have critical awareness, effective communication, teamwork skills, knowledge and skills development and continuous professional development. It is vital to reflect regularly to ensure that all these skills are being met and with a high standard of enthusiasm. As stated by Tarrant (2013) practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that the upmost care and learning opportunities are available for all children. This shows that Practitioners should provide children with the resources and materials to learn and experiment. As practitioners carry out reflection, they develop the skills to pay more attention to themselves within practice. Professional practitioners become more aware of what they say, how their feeling and their response to situations. Over a period of time reflection will become natural and practitioners will do it without thinking in everyday practice. This is an extremely beneficial skill. When reflecting as a practitioner it can be extremely helpful to use a reflective accounts form. They can be given to you in an early year setting in order to document the reflection process. Reflective account forms can be useful as they help you to structure your reflection by following the steps. Practitioners are also able to note down key details just after the event has happened so that other staff members are able to read what happened. This helps to ensure that nothing is left out and you can look back on your notes if needed. Reflective accounts forms are normally quite brief as there is not much room in the boxes. The form allows you to note down, what the nature of the event or experience was, what you learnt from the experience, how you changed or improved your practice as a result and how this experience is relevant to your continuing professional development.

Theorist and models of reflection

There are a number of different models of reflection these models are a significant guide to help and support practitioners to reflect. All the models are unique however, they do all have similarities. Gibbs reflective cycle is one of the more well-known models of reflection. The Gibbs reflective cycle was developed in 1988 by Graham Gibbs in order to give structure to learning from experiences. The cycle is made up of six steps starting with description of the experience this gives the person the opportunity to explain what happened. The next step is thoughts and feelings about the experience, followed by evaluation of the experience this can be both positive and negative. The fourth step is analysis this allows everyone involved to make sense of the situation. Penultimately, the conclusion about what you learned and what you could do better next time. Finally, an action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future, or general changes you may find appropriate. According to Gibbs (1988) This model is a good way to work through an experience. This model can work for both a one-off experience or a situation you go through frequently.



(Source: Bskz12 ,2014)

John Driscolls model of reflection is one of the simplest models it was developed by driscoll in 1994,2004 and 2007. Driscolls models centres around three questions what? So What? Now What? The first step is to describe the event or action. The second step is to explain why that action or event was significant and the final step is to explain how you will use that information to inform future practice. By asking yourself or others these three questions you can start to analyse experiences and learn from these. (Nursing Answers, 2022).



(Source: Nursing Answers, 2022)

David Kolb published his learning cycle in the year 1984. Kolb's theory is made up of four different stages. The learner touches on all of the bases. The first step is a concrete experience a new experience or situation is encountered or a reinterpretation of an existing experience. Step two is to reflect on the experience. It is important to evaluate inconsistencies so that the practitioner is able to gain a good understanding. Step three is abstract conceptualisation which is learning from the experience. Reflection provides you with opportunities to change. The final step is active experimentation, practitioners must apply their new ideas to the world around them. (McLeod,2017). As stated by Kolb (1984, p. 38) "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience". This tells us that the more you experience the more knowledge you gain.



(Source: McLeod, 2017)

Tacit / Explicit knowledge

According to Prabhakaran (2022) Tacit knowledge is knowledge that cannot be expressed easily and is usually acquired from personal experiences. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can easily be expressed to others, codified, and recorded. Tacit knowledge is difficult to transfer and most likely requires face to face interaction or teaching over a long period of time. Explicit knowledge is easily transferable to others and can be stored in physical or electronic form, unlike tacit knowledge. Examples of explicit knowledge are maps, handbooks, and instruction manuals they all have to be followed step by step. A number of years ago Beth Crandall carried out research on the intuition of nurses in a neonatal intensive care unit. The nurses could see sepsis more accurately than the blood tests at the time. The doctors trusted the nurses and would provide the baby with antibiotics straight away before the blood tests even came back. Crandall researched; how did the nurses know? The nurses stated that it was intuition and experience. Beth then asked the question in a different way she said, how was the last time you saw a baby coming down with sepsis? What did you notice? Beth was then able to combine a list of cues from all the interviews. The cues were part of the nurse's tacit knowledge. (Dr Klein, 2018).

Sepsis Indicators		
Indicator	Literature of Sepsis Infants	Normally Accounts
Unstable temperature	Yes	Yes
Apnoeas	Yes	Yes
Gravel appearance	Yes	Yes
Feeding abnormality	Yes	Yes
Abnormal abdomen	Yes	Yes
Respiratory distress	Yes	Yes
Jaundice	Yes	Yes
Lethargy	Yes	Yes
Unusually	Yes	Yes
Color changes	Yes	Yes
Respiratory distress	Yes	Yes
Rarely	Yes	Yes

(Source: Dr Klein,2018)

Conclusion

To conclude, reflection is a key skill for all professional practitioners to have in order to better their own knowledge and understanding as well as providing the best care for the children in their setting. Reflection allows you to improve and gain an insight into the children's lives both outside and inside the childcare setting. There are many different models you can use in order to help you through the process of reflection however, not everyone will work for you, and it is specific to the person. Practitioners can also use reflection within the setting to identify the children's likes and dislikes. Furthermore, the children's ability so that they can be put into groups based off of their needs for future activities.



(Source: Inspire Me, No Date)

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