

Reflection Portfolio

Element 2 Reflective log

Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words)
Gruffalo trail outside in the forest area with the following activities; a trail with numbered Gruffalo footprints, reading the story, searching the wooded area for woodland animals, digital buttons with woodland animal noises, using metal detectors to search for nuts amongst cut grass, and discussing colours from Gruffalo colour book.
Aim/Objective of the activity
There were several aims of the activity; Mathematic - following the numbers on the footprints 1-10, promoting number recognition and counting. Identifying colours using the Gruffalo colour book and the digital pre-recorded colour buttons. Welsh Government (2015a) state that mathematics must be meaningful to children for it to become embedded in their learning. Welsh Government (2015a) also state that both the indoor and outdoor environment should be used to generate a curiosity in children and allow them to explore the world around them; which is vital for mathematical development. Language, literacy and communication - reading the story, being surrounded by vocabulary, promoting use of language when discussing the story, what could be seen etc. Welsh Government (2015a) state that language, literacy and communication skills should be developed through being given a variety of meaningful opportunities. Knowledge and understanding of the world - promoting knowledge of woodland creatures, distinguishing features of the creatures i.e. colours, sounds, animal habitats. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills – using the coloured metal detectors to search for stones with hazelnuts on for the mouse. Welsh Government (2015b) state that children should use a range of ICT resources and tools in order to investigate and explore mathematics and develop their skills. Physical - walking, skipping, hopping, running and kneeling. Welsh Government (2015b) state that practitioners should provide opportunities for children to develop

energy and motivation and to encourage spatial awareness, balance, control and co-ordination.

Personal and Social Skills – taking turns, sharing, following rules, respond to others in appropriate manner. Welsh Government (2015a) state that children's personal and social development skills should be developed through experiential learning. Davies and Hamilton (2016) support this by stating that a curriculum should not be inspired by assessment but by practical, active and experiential play and learning. This links to the work of theorists Bruner, Vygotsky who state that environmental and experiential factors affect the development of children (Johnston and Nahmad-Williams, 2009).

Your role

My roles were to plan, source the resources, prepare and lead the activity. My role was also to support all children with their learning. Supporting staff to support individual children was also a part of my role. I carried out a risk assessment before undertaking the activity. I discussed the activity with the children and my colleagues before starting so that they knew what to expect, what the boundaries were (as we were going outside), and to remind the children of our Cylch guidelines;

- We look after ourselves
- We look after each other
- We look after our Cylch

Supporting and encouraging play and being a good role model was a vital part of mine during this activity. Identifying what the children could do and how to help them develop further. Moyles (2005) discusses the importance of using Bruner's and Vygotsky's theories of scaffolding to support the children to move beyond their current abilities. I continuously monitored the activity to ensure the risk assessment was followed.

Positive aspects – why?

Positive aspects of this activity were that the children thoroughly enjoyed it, this was because the activity was fun-packed and multi-dimensional. The activity promoted inclusivity as there were a variety of activities providing opportunities for children of all abilities. The activity was based on a familiar theme; 'The Gruffalo', a

story that the children enjoy not only in Cylch but also at home. Being familiar with the book, the story and the characters allowed the children to really take part in the storytelling, becoming immersed. By carrying out this activity outside in the wooded area (very similar to that in the story) the children could relate it to the real world. The children were stimulated and intrigued from the opening of the doors to the minute we came back inside. Another positive aspect was that it supported language, literacy and communication development. The children used a wide variety of language, prompted from the activities, the story and discussions that occurred as a result. Bain, James and Harrison (2005) state that children can engage and flourish when presented with effective communication skills. The activity was well planned with enough time for all children to participate. The risk assessment that I carried out prior to the activity ensured all risks had been identified and planned for.

Challenging aspects – why?

I had not anticipated how difficult it would be to manage the behaviour of some children with behavioural issues, despite having risk assessed it. The activity was carried out as a whole group, on this occasion 19 children aged 2-4, with 5 staff. It was difficult to co-ordinate the activity and manage some behaviour. Limited resources also contributed to difficulties in managing the children who had to wait their turn to use the metal detectors and find the pre-recorded buttons.

What knowledge was demonstrated?

Good knowledge of the risk assessment was demonstrated. Also, good knowledge of each individual child's needs allowing for the pre-empting or quick resolve of any issues. Excellent knowledge was demonstrated of both local and National policy with regards to staffing ratios. Having planned this activity with 7 staff in mind, I had to re assess the situation when 2 members of staff were absent that day. Although the ratios are 1: 8 for 3-year olds and above and 1: 4 for 2-year olds (Welsh Government, 2016, p. 40), local policy dictates that we try and adhere to the 1: 4 ratio for all children. I calculated that we were still within ratio and continued with the activity.

What skills were demonstrated?

I demonstrated good organisational skills when planning and preparing this activity, all resources were set out in an inviting and imaginative way to pique and stimulate children's interest. This ensured that my attention was solely on the presentation and delivery of the activity, resulting in maintaining children's concentration.

I demonstrated good multitasking skills, reading the story whilst being alert and aware of the needs of the children and my colleagues.

Good role modelling, demonstrating to children the importance of team work, taking turns and patience.

Story-telling is a skill that I feel I need to develop further, particularly in Welsh, however, I felt I pitched this at an appropriate level, which meant that most of the children were able to maintain interest.

Excellent communication skills were demonstrated, before, during and after the activity, this ensured that all children and staff were fully aware of what was happening and what was expected of them in terms of behaviour.

Which values were demonstrated?

Patience is a value that I demonstrated, however, patience is a difficult value to maintain under pressure. There were points during the activity where it was difficult to stay patient whilst trying to read, answer questions, manage behaviour and support staff supporting difficult behaviour.

Empathy was shown to those children who struggled with taking turns, as a group we discussed why it is important to share and take turns, supporting them in understanding and become empathetic themselves. If children can see empathy being role modelled, they begin to understand the importance of developing empathy for others. Wouter (2013) supports this by discussing the importance of explaining to children why a moral/value is important as well as seeing it role modelled for children to be able to acquire it.

Commitment to the activity was also demonstrated, as a result of being 2 members of staff down due to sickness, I was committed to providing this activity to the best of my ability despite difficult circumstances whilst remaining in ratio.

What could have been done differently? Why?

When undertaking the activity again I would consider doing it in smaller groups, up to 6 children with 2/3 staff, this would allow for all children to contribute, and receive the staff's full attention.

It is possible that there were too many activities going on and that some of the children experiencing difficulties in maintaining concentration may have been better suited to one or two of the activities. Therefore, it may be worthwhile limiting the activities.

I would also consider the learning styles of the children. In smaller groups it would have been easier to plan for groups of like-minded children who have similar learning styles. Blandford and Knowles (2009) states that activities should be presented in different learning styles such as visual, audio and kinaesthetic as their responses will improve.

What?



(Spielverlagerung, 2018)

Reflection is not a new concept, in fact, Brock (2015) discusses how it can be traced back to Greek philosophers Socrates, Aristotle and Plato. There are many definitions of Reflective Practice. Caldwell and Grobbel (2013) state that Reflective Practice is the process of exploring actions or events resulting in practice development and increased skills and knowledge. Lindon and Trodd (2016) believe that reflection should be a process everyone can undertake. Practitioners should be constantly aware of how their own practice can affect the learning and development of children (Lindon and Trodd, 2016). Bulman, Lathlean and Gobbi (2012) discuss the need for practitioners to be courageous, honest, open-minded, and willing to take and act on criticism for reflection to be worthwhile (2012, cited in Caldwell and Grobell, 2013, p. 319).

Why?

Before practitioners can really become proficient at reflection, it is important to understand why it is important. Reflection can help establish self-awareness, skills development and personal improvement (Kovach-Clark, 2017). This is supported by Hallet (2013) who states that reflective learning allows for practitioners to develop professionally and personally, as well as improve self-esteem and self-confidence, which all, consequently contribute to improved teaching and knowledge. Bolton and Delderfield (2018) believe that reflection can allow individuals to explore experiences, to discover more about themselves, their education, their practice, their peers and society. One significant benefit to the practice of reflection for early years practitioners is the collaboration of experience and knowledge for the benefit of information sharing. Venninen et al. (2012) undertook a study that looked at developing a network of Early Years practitioners with the purpose of developing a unified early years pedagogy. This study was important because it outlined the importance of sharing practice, experience and knowledge based on reflection. Brown (2015) supports this by stating that sharing knowledge benefits everyone.

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When?

There are many theories on reflection and when is the best time to reflect. A variety of models are available to guide the reflective practitioner. However, there are two opportunities when reflection can be carried out, during an event/incident/situation or after the event/incident/situation. Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) discusses Schön's theory in which, reflection is broken down into;

- > reflection **in** action- which is the process of reflecting during an activity, re-assessing and acting in the moment
- > reflection **on** action- which is the process of reflecting on an event after it has happened. Reflecting in action is something most practitioners do subconsciously when immersed in a situation or activity and can be informal. Reflecting on action should be a more formal process, undertaken after the event.



(Teacherscreated, 2019)



(Wikipedia, 2018)

How?

Two considerations to be made to reflect effectively are a collaborative approach and allocation of time. Hallet (2013) states that for effective collaboration to occur, favourable conditions must be made available; opportunity and comfortable space to reflect, opportunities for formal and informal reflection, individually or as a group. Reflection should be honest and truthful, open-minded, critical (about oneself, not others) and clear. Lindon and Trodd (2016) believe that effective reflective practice evolves with time and experience, the more it is undertaken the more effective it will become. Individuals should not become dependent on others and should be proactive and motivated. Reflection should be a continuous process, especially within the education and care setting. This is supported by Maksimovic and Osmanovic (2018) who state that reflective practice should be a continuous process in an attempt to improve teaching quality. Bleach (2014) states that early years practitioners can only improve knowledge, practice and learn about themselves and their teaching by actively reflecting on and evaluating their own practices on a continuous basis. This is supported by Venninen et al. (2012) who state that for early years practitioners to develop their teaching practices and practical knowledge, a reflective mind must be adopted.

Practitioners

Early years practitioners play a pivotal role in providing and maintaining an excellent standard of care and education. Bleach (2014) states that continuing professional development (CPD) and adopting a reflective approach is fundamental to providing the highest standards of care. "Reflecting on practice underpins the work of an early year's practitioner" (Canning, 2010, p.1). Schön theorised that reflective practice is a benchmark for excellent practice (1987, cited in Enfield and Stasz, 2011, p. 113). This is supported by Bubb and Earley (2010) who state that practitioners who undertake research and enquiry play an integral part in inspirational practice. They define research and enquiry as reflecting on own practice, individually and collaboratively investigating, gaining new perspectives and making changes. As a result of reflection, practitioners are able to make action plans, therefore improving service provision for children. Collaborative working is an important part of reflective practice. Gill and Whitehouse (2017) state that practitioners can form a community, which shares practice, opinions, experience, ideas and worries. Lindon and Trodd (2016) discuss the SMART the technique as being useful for practitioners to reflect; **S**pecific, **M**eaningful, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imebound.

Reflective Models and Theory

There are many models available to support reflection, however some allow for more in-depth exploration than others. Schön's 1983 model is practical and can be used swiftly for evaluating an experience (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018). Kolb's 1984 model probes more deeply, investigating the experiential learning and active experimentation (Lindon and Trodd, 2016). Gibbs's 1988 model emphasizes considering the feelings of the individuals involved (Paige-Smith and Craft). Nguyen-Truong et al. (2018) discuss reflective practice linking it to experiential learning, this corresponds to the theories of scholars such as Dewey, Vygotsky and Piaget who believed that individuals learn by experience. Froebel believed that play is an active and integral part of a child's life and is vital to develop thinking skills (Bruce, 2012). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory, whereby the child is central to all other ecological systems, should be considered when reflecting. Houston (2017) believes that reflection can be used by individuals in the micro system (family), meso system (schools), exo system (communities) and macro system (laws) to support and promote development of the development of children and improve outcomes.

Links to Practice

Legislation

Over recent years national and local policy have outlined the importance of developing reflective practice. Maksimovic and Osmanovic (2018) discuss the change in teaching roles in recent years and how the teacher's role is no longer about simply imparting knowledge. Teachers are now expected to be so many things; "The teacher's role is to help, encourage, follow, direct and advise children. This way, he becomes the organizer, the coordinator, the motivator, the evaluator, the researcher and the reflective practitioner" (Maksimovic and Osmanovic, 2018, p. 172). With the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, there is an increased emphasis on dealing with current challenges to improve children's outcomes. This legislation ensures that public sector agencies work together to improve children's well-being (Welsh Government, 2015c). Article 28 of the United Nations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) state that all children have a right to an education (UNICEF, no date). In championing children's rights, practitioners promote their thinking skills and support them in becoming effective learners (Gripton, 2015). It is the role of all practitioners to ensure that the education provided is contemporary, meaningful and inspirational, something that can be achieved by adopting best practice.



Best Practice



Estyn (no date) state that they are in a unique position to report on effective practice to influence improvements nationwide. Mudiad Meithrin (2018) have their own quality scheme; 'Safonau Serenog'. The aim of this scheme is to share best practice and set achievable and practical goals that can improve practice. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) (2019) register and inspect care settings in Wales to ensure that care provisions meet minimum standards and provide high quality service to ensure the well-being of its users. All of the above quality schemes provide settings and practitioners with the motivation, support and guidance to evaluate and reflect on their own practice for the purpose of improvement and development.



(Meithrin.cymru, no date)



(CareInspectorateWales, 2019)



(Estyn, 2017)

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	The PGCE will allow me to go into teaching.	To do the PGCE in Wales I need a B grade in GCSE Maths, I only got a C grade so I will research how to resit my Maths GCSE I will look into sitting a Maths GCSE equivalency test as this might be the quickest, easiest and cheapest option.	To find about the possibility of resitting my maths GCSE I will look at the Cardiff and Vale College (http://www.cavc.ac.uk) to research the options for doing a GCSE in maths as an evening course. To find out about the equivalency test I will look at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's (UWTSD) website (https://www.uwtسد.ac.uk) as I am aware that they offer this. I will also look at the Cardiff Metropolitan University Website	I would do my research in June and July 2019 with a view to starting a course in September. I will research this in June and July 2019 so that if I decide to take this route I could apply for the PGCE in the knowledge that I can

		I will then need to research how and where I could access a PGCE (Primary) course.	(http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk) as this is geographically nearer. I will research the PGCE courses available at both UWTSD (https://www.uwtسد.ac.uk) and Cardiff Metropolitan University (http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk)	sit my equivalency test before starting. June and July 2019 so that I can make a decision on if, and where I want to do the PGCE. If I decide to go ahead, I would need to think about applying early in the 2019/2020 academic year because of the competitive nature of the PGCE.
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		PGCE courses are extremely competitive, so I would have to try and gain some experience or skills that would set me apart from everyone else. I would attempt do this by; • volunteering in local schools in different classes to gain experience with different ages • Look into any qualifications that could improve my chances such as Makaton, BSL,	I would contact local schools, for example Lansdowne Primary School (http://www.lansdowneprimary.co.uk), Kitchener Primary School (http://www.kitchenerprimaryschool.com) Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna (https://www.ysgoltreganna.cymru/en/) I will look at useful websites such as Cardiff Workforce and Development and Accredited Centre (https://www.childcareincardiff-training.co.uk)	I would be looking to start volunteering in September 2019. I would be looking to do some of these over the summer holidays, July and August 2019.
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		Special Educational Needs • Improve my Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Personal Statement • Work hard at my degree to get a good overall grade	to research any vocational course available. I would make an appointment with the Careers advisor in UWTSD, Mark Thomas (mark.thomas@uwtsd.ac.uk) to get advice on how to improve my CV and personal statement. He would be able to advise me on the PGCE and equivalency tests as well. Utilise the support from the tutors on my degree course to achieve to the best of my ability.	June 2019 Ongoing
2. Knowledge Safeguarding Career in the Police Force	To successfully use my degree to access a career in the Police Force, Specialising in Safeguarding	To research how I would be able to achieve this, would I need to become a police officer first or could I apply for safeguarding roles after graduating.	I would use the website Prospects (https://www.prospects.ac.uk/) to do some research into what roles I could use my degree for. I would also the Police now website (https://www.policenow.org.uk)	January 2020

		Improve my Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Personal Statement and seek careers advice. Gain an insight to what it is like to work in a safe guarding role in the police force.	The Police recruitment website (http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk/) South Wales Police website (https://www.south-wales.police.uk) I would make an appointment with the Careers advisor in UWTSD, Mark Thomas (mark.thomas@uwtsd.ac.uk) to get advice on the police force. Speak to lecturer Sioned Saer as she has experience in this area.	September 2019 September 2019
3. Skills Welsh Language	Although I speak Welsh and currently work in a Welsh setting, I struggle with confidence.	Research Welsh Courses	I would research local Welsh courses using the Cardiff University Website (https://welshforadults.cardiff.ac.uk/)	September 2019

	Improving my Welsh can only benefit my career prospects and improve my self-belief.	Find some local Welsh learners socialising groups Volunteer in a Welsh medium Primary School	Use word of mouth to locate local groups that benefit Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna (https://www.ysgoltreganna.cymru/en/)	September 2019 September 2019
4. Skills Management and Leadership Skills	I am currently in a management role, however I feel I would benefit from some formal training in order to perform my role to the best of my ability and also to improve future job prospects.	Research local available courses/training programs.	I would use the following websites for researching; Cardiff Workforce Development and Accredited Centre (https://www.childcareincardiff-training.co.uk) Cardiff and Vale College (http://www.cavc.ac.uk)	September 2019

		Shadow an established and experienced manager	Approach Mudiad Meithrin to see if they could arrange this (post@meithrin.cymru)	September 2019
5. Values Patience	I feel I am quite a patient individual; however, I feel I could benefit from ensuring that patience can be maintained under pressure.	Research local Well-being and Mindfulness courses in order to help remain calm in difficult situations.	I would research these courses on the Samye Foundation Wales Website (https://www.sfwales.org/)	September 2019
6. Values Integrity	I feel integrity is vital in order to lead a happy, successful and honest life.	I feel like I can honestly say I possess these skills however, I also feel it is important to maintain focus on what is important in order to continue on this route.	I would research on the Samye Foundation Wales Website (https://www.sfwales.org/) Stay true oneself and remain honest and respectful.	September 2019 Ongoing

		The well-being and Mindfulness course would help with this.	Peer Observations, Miquel and Duran (2017) state that collaboration and peer learning amongst practitioners is linked directly to improved methods and innovative practice.	
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