

The Significance of Reflective Practice in Early Years Settings

What is reflection and why it is important?

Reflection is a thinking process where an individual has a chance to look back on what activities they have done and consider it as right or wrong and it is a way of getting learning lessons from previous work. Reflection is a process of self understanding and self analysing – how much progress has been achieved, through this reflection process a professional practitioner routinely work to develop their professional practices. As early years practitioners a fundamental aspect of reflection is improve knowledge by learning from experience. Through reflection process professionals guided to undertaking their job responsibilities seriously and independently so that they organise their work and make better performance. Reflective thinking is a various process. Professionals implement reflective thinking practice for professional expansion. Without reflection they unable to make progression instead they go through into risk factors, without facts analysing and understanding professionals direct to poor judgement, as a result they makes poor decision and damage organisational reputation (Shandomo, 2010).

Professional development through reflective practice in early years settings:

Brock (2015), points out that reflection is about reviewing process where a practitioner going through into some issues to investigate further more to understand practically from different range of aspects and viewpoints. When the issues gets bigger than the practitioner allow more time and effort to evaluate them and they need to go into the centre of the problems to get the right feelings and to understand the right procedures. During the reflective practice a professional need to use their right level of sensation and impression which plays significant role play within early year practice. Reflection in early years professionals involving with learning, research, professional development and improve practical knowledge. The reflective process helping to improve personal experience and skills that empower professional perspectives, empathy and professional stability that can make a positive change to young children and their families.

Frequent reflection in early years settings influencing all children's and their families' lives. Undertaking effective reflection process give chance to reform early years education and care system, reflect on professional knowledge and skills and establish settings' policies and procedures reform overall settings. The aim of reflective practice is to focus on young

Reflective practice:

Reflective practice is a way of gaining new experience by reflecting learning and observing from prior work. It is an important process for early years practitioners, helping them to understand and encourage to reflect on their performance such as work management, class room plans, organising and helping children to manage different situations. Reflective practice is the process of reflection where an individual may need to use four aspects of reflective cycle (self assess, consider, practice and teach) frequently to recognise the system of reflection. Reflective process is well organised reviewing process for all practitioners which allow them to build relationships to create a new experience from their last experience and ensuring that children achieve higher progress (Cambridge Assessment International Education, no date).

Importance of reflective practice in early years professionals:

Early years careers (2015), suggested that reflective practice enables a practitioner to evaluate past work activities to check what improvements they have and what part of actions they need to develop and to make their performance more challenging everyday to produce the best education and care for children. As reflective practitioners their ultimate duty is to help children to move forward ahead to elevate their level of skills and understanding in early years settings. Reflective practice helping professionals for their personal improvements and bring righteousness as a professional figure. Through reflective practice practitioners think about how they perform, realise their strengths and weaknesses; always be aware that how their movements influence on young children and their parents. Regular review systems in settings and individual reflection enhance the quality of practice.

According to Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (2016), as a professional in early years settings reflective practice is a process of reviewing over a practice and look over its operating system and constant evaluating to find out consequences of the practice. A reflective practitioner need to undertake a balancing research into their practice, to understand and discover the strengths and weaknesses of their practice. Continuous investigating in practice allow practitioners to know what areas need to be improved and dedicating their efforts towards the areas and manage to bring improvements. By using reflective process practitioners become more effective and professional in their practice.

Reflection is a fundamental part of any professional practice. Throughout the reflective practice every individuals gets benefits from it including children, parents and carers; practitioners also

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



Expert Program Management, 2019

The Health and Care Professions Council (2019), recommended that there are many benefits for being a reflective practitioner for health and care professionals through significant reflection. As a reflective practitioner they underpinning every professionals with effective teamwork and encourage developments in their practice. They persuade everyone about the professionals growth, reputation and achievement. Health and care practitioners continuously reassuring others about their productive work and they reflect to make changes to achieve best form of work. Reflection supports practitioners to regularly boost their practical work and help functioning system in their professional work. It is become a day-to-day work for health and care professionals.

Gibbs' reflective learning cycle:

According to University of Edinburgh (2020), Gibbs model of reflection guiding a professional practitioner for six stages to assessing their experience into their practice. Gibbs established his reflective cycle and structured it from his learning experience. His reflective cycle is effective for evaluating experience, replicate the process and understand and learn from the experiment. This model of reflection provides support experimental learning to make plan and get improve in future experience. Gibbs' six stages of reflective cycle overlays with:

Description – describe the overall situation in this stage, indicate some key points and putting some concern and go through over the situation. Asking some frequent questions for example, what happened, how and when did it occur?

Feelings – finding out any thoughts or feelings related to the situation and review those feelings how they affected the experience.

Evaluation – evaluate the incident what things went good and what affected badly, find out positives and negatives sides of the experience to go into next stage.

Analysis – analyse the situation and get a real sense about the experience, investigate more deeper into the situation for full details.

Conclusion – focus on the conclusion stage to get the final idea of the experience. Put questions about what things could learned from the experience and what could be improved. Focus on what things could have done differently to avoid negative reaction.

Action plan – at this final stage summarise everything together to gain different ideas to manage related situation effectively in the future.

Early years careers (2015) indicates that Gibbs' reflective cycle is functional in making progress and through this six-stage process professionals can able to approach to developing their expertise to be able to apply into practice. Pass through all the stages they gain a new experience – a positive learning approach to all children within early years professionals. Undertaking Gibbs' reflective experience could be longer but when professionals carefully examined all stages so they can find the best possible outcome for their practice. This reflective cycle helps practitioners to identify what parts of work need to be improved and what works best for young children in settings. Organise reflective practice brings many benefits to the early years settings and make practitioners more confident, more professional and more productive to provide quality services. `a

Tarrant (2013), states that it is important to involves with reflective practice as it is holding remarkable position of professionalism. It is worth taking step by step process of reflection, as a practitioner at first need to understand the concept of reflecting in practice before moving into the next step for development. For long time practitioners they expert doing a revision of their work regular basis but other professionals thinks reflecting process takes lot of time in professional practice. For experienced and expert professionals continuous observing skills, brainpowers, thinking process, reflecting and then approving with new practice to uphold their professionalism. It is important to understand the value of the process of reflection and establish the professional reflecting in practice. As practitioners, they realise and acknowledge the benefits of professional expression. Being professional means improving professional values, principles and professional attitudes, to achieve these professional needs to work hard, effortfully and maintain routines as well as dealing challenging work. Kolb's learning cycle gives a clear view that from an experience through the process with reflection and experiment a practitioner can able to gain the development of practice. Professional practitioners need to focus on the Kolb's next stages of learning cycle including learning from the experience, exploring, planning and get into active experiment to create a successful professional practice.

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