

Element 2 – Reflective Log

Brief description of activity

The activity was a cutting exercise for reception children aged four to five years old, where they were provided with a template of a chick's face, a paper plate and materials such as tissue paper, card or felt paper. Children had to cut their chick's out and stick them onto the paper plate and decorate it with the materials to create a nest. There were six children per session.

Aim/ Objective of the activity

The aim of the activity was to enhance children's creativity and their sensory experiences. I took this approach as it is stated by the Foundation Phase (2015) that children should be engaged in activities where they develop their ability to express their creative ideas. As the children had a wide range of materials, their craft skills were fostered and promoted by using their sensory touch and the ability to choose freely on what materials they wanted. The aim was also to develop the children's use of understanding of colours, textures and tones whilst using experimentation with the variety of materials. The activity being a cutting exercise also developed the children's fine motor skills where they had to cut around a template.

My role

My role in the activity was the leader and guider. As I commenced the activity, I had the duty to clarify and support the activity to the children. Some children, I supported with a one to one basis by helping them with the cutting and guiding them on where to cut and others just reassurance. I tried to enhance the children's learning by asking them questions, such as 'What does that feel like?' or 'Can you tell me what you have done there?'.

Positive Aspects – Why?

Overall, it was successful, and the children seemed to respond well to the initial activity. I believe this, as I feel the children relished the independence element, where they could choose what they wanted to put on the nest and where they wanted it. As said by Vygotsky, children who become self-motivated by their own work secure their learning in future (Dolya, 2010).

As the activity was led by myself, I felt self esteem to my own benefit and more confident in one's own worth. The children enjoyed my idea of the activity, so I felt more assured when making up new activities in later dates. The activity was grouped between six children each time, and it was a positive aspect as the children were enlightened on the sharing element and waiting their turn when picking out the materials.

Challenging aspects- why?

I believe the challenging aspect to the activity was time. As it was a busy task, I felt there was a rush to achieve the outcome for each child and then move onto the next as the whole class needed to be done. Whilst the time was a matter, this made it hard to develop the children's further skills on cutting. If a child was struggling with cutting, I felt I could help them there but not carry it on as I was preoccupied with other children. There was also no additional support with children who are EAL that did not grasp the task element.

What knowledge was demonstrated?

My experience I believe contributed to the knowledge that was displayed for the children. As a practitioner, I have gained the understanding of children's development and what aspects the children need to undertake to progress in their learning, one being fine motor skills. As a follower for the Foundation Phase, I know that it is important to enhance the children's learning through play and elements of pleasure learning, so it was important for me to create an activity, that not only enriched their learning but was enjoyable too.

What skills were demonstrated?

There were a numerous of skills that were demonstrated during the initial task. I had the goal setting skill to achieve the fine motor outcome needed for the children to develop whilst also monitoring them during the task. As a practitioner, I demonstrated a social skill to show the children what to do before the task and listened to their needs if they were challenged with the task. I mastered a positive relation skill where I had respect for the children's feelings and had positive interactions with them when they were doing their work.

What values were demonstrated?

My professional values that were displayed I believe was organisation and planning. I prepared the materials needed for the activity beforehand and made sure there was enough for

each child. I respected each child's ability when they were cutting out and showed caring elements and understanding to their needs. I demonstrated an ethical practice and conducted a moral upright practice towards the children. I tried to strengthen their personal growth and their independence. I showed participation elements by enabling all the children can access to the task and contributed to it.

What could have been done differently? Why?

Next time if the activity was done again, I could enable it to be an outside activity where I could consider outdoor learning opportunities. Bilton (2010) states that learning outside for children caters for all their needs, cognitive, emotional and social. Bruner was also a promotor of cognitive development and believed discovery learning is key. If I enhanced my activity outside, all these areas of development would be additionally encouraged.

With this task, there could also be an opportunity for an assessment practice. If I developed a learning opening with the children gaining knowledge about chickens before the task to see how much they know and then after the task, there is a chance to gain valuable knowledge on the children's working memory. It is also important to remember to support children who have English as an additional language (EAL). Next time, I could support the children with visuals or cards with pictures of the equipment they need to use, for example a scissors. I could make the lines clearer for them for where they need to cut.

Element 3 – Briefing paper

Reflective Practice

What is reflection?

Reflection is not just about solitary, it also comprises one's practice with others and is a vital element when working with children (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011). This takes courage and open-mindedness for an early year's practitioner, where they are increasingly encouraged to enhance their professional development. However, this is a bold statement, considering, practitioners must provide opportunities for children, enhance policy initiatives, protect, and plan to meet the demands of an early year's curriculum (Reed and Canning, 2010). *So why is reflection so important?*

Reflective practice is presented for everyone, not just practitioners with the greater experience or seniority (Lindon, 2012). Roffey-Barentsen and Malthouse (2013) define reflective practice as a way in which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance. Such reflection is rooted from Dewey (1933), who proposed that practitioners 'critically reflect' so that development is progressed. This means it is about looking back and becoming the practitioner you desire to be with the learning journey embraced (Johns, 2013).

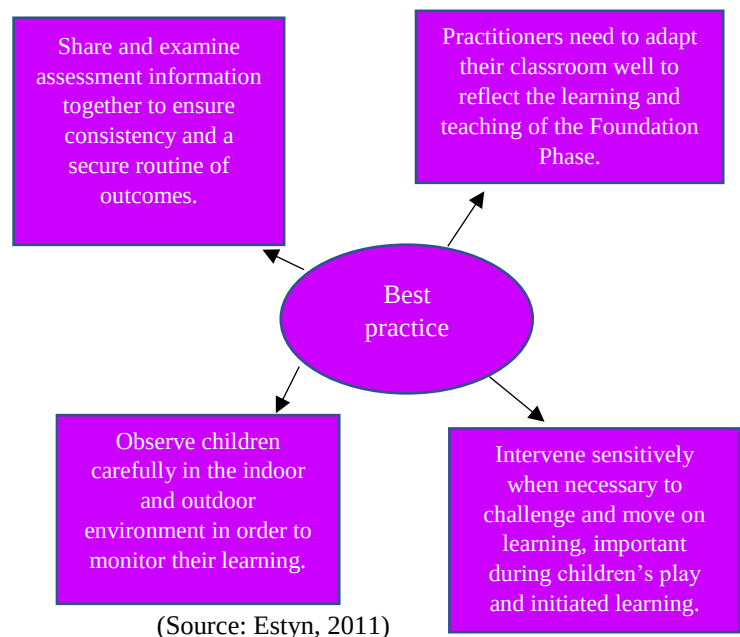
Points to consider

To engage with the process of becoming an effective reflective practitioner, consider these key questions

- **Why is reflection important to practice?**
- **What is it?**
- **How do one reflect?**
- **What are the benefits?**
(Reed and Canning, 2013)

Estyn

Estyn inspect good practices in Wales and provide details on the best reflective environment for the practitioner.



The challenges of reflection

When things go wrong, reflective practice can help you to identify the change or intervention that needs to be improved (Page, 2013). However, there can be challenges when fostering reflective practice. Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) state that making time and space to reflect is not accidental but one of main challenges produced by reflection. Fostering reflective practice is not easy, and as Edwards (2000) believes, it is about finding the right balance between expectations of learning through reflection, time and then the experience involved in it. Having a critical friend or a reflective practitioner, Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) state is beneficial. Bringing more than one outlook to practice can help to overcome subjectively in reflections and improve your practice for all.

How to reflect?

There are a numerous of reflective models that can help practitioners reflect in their practice. One of most commonly used in Early Years is Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle.



(Source: Bassot, 2016)

Gibb's reflective cycle is a theoretical framework comprised by six essential stages (Husebo et al., 2015), and is built on Kolb's learning cycle. While Gibb's offers a basic reflective practice just on feelings, some argue that it needs a broader, critically approach (Finlay, 2008). Forrest (2008) agrees upon this and suggests this cycle does not allow the practitioner to move forward and one of the purposes of a reflection is to improve practice where we need to move forward, as well as looking back. Conversely to that, it is important to acknowledge that Gibbs' reflective cycle does encourage the practitioner to think systematically about the experience or activity taken with the children (Oxford Brookes University, 2018). Millington (2013) expresses that Gibbs' reflective cycle is a good reflective progress as it ensures all the situations are covered. Page (2013) also states that the advantage of this model is the straightforwardness, the questions are easily adapted for the practitioner and can be answered effortlessly.

Another model of reflection that a practitioner can use in their settings is Schon's model of reflection.

Donald Schon told by Munby and Russel (2006) was someone who presented the account for professional knowledge in practice and his work appears regularly in Early Years workforce. Lindon (2012) explains his reflection as follow:

Reflection – in action

- The experience itself
- Thinking about the situation straight away
- Acting immediately

Reflection – on action

- Reflecting on something that has happened
- Gathering new information quickly to change the situation for the best.

Dewey (1933) was among the first to consider reflection as a form of thinking and from this, gained the influence of Schon's reflective model (Finlay, 2008). However, even though Schon's work has inspired many models, it has also gained criticism. Ekebergh (2007) states that it is not possible for a practitioner to distance themselves from the situation to reflect in the moment and this is where Schon's reflective model has a disadvantage. It is important to acknowledge that this author suggests stepping out of the situation and reflecting retrospectively. Conversely, Schon's reflective model does provide practitioners helpful ways to think about reflection. Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) state that this model enables practitioners to question assumptions that we sometimes take for granted and see reflection through the eyes of others. It is more than thinking, it is about exploring how we feel and how we understand it.

Element 4 – Personal development plan

Area for further development	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Forest School Course	I believe I would like to progress myself onto this course as I would like to develop my confidence and self- esteem through a hand- on experience in a natural environment. Forest School has been considered an inspirational process and I believe this can inspire me when working with children and encouraging the outdoor learning environment.	This can be applied online, where I can pick the course I want to go on, which is ‘Assisting Forest School – Level 2’ and apply for it over on the website.	The course is supported by Agored Cymru and is a four-day course spread out over three months plus the competition of coursework. The course costs of £400.	Forest School SNPT. (no date) state that the dates confirmed are either 21 st of September or the 5 th or 19 th of October.
2. Knowledge PGCE teaching route	As a young child, I’ve always looked up to teachers and dreamed of becoming one and still to this day, I	This degree can be applied online via the university’s website. On the website, it states that they have a	UWTSD. (2018) state that this is the route for people wishing to gain the Qualified	September 2019.

	intend to be one. I believe I can extend my professional skills by enabling myself on this degree and embrace the understanding of teaching. The profession looks awarding with endless opportunities to strive.	100% employment rate, so it does push me further to apply for it. There are additional entry criteria, where if I was going to apply, I would have to hold a good honours degree, with the minimum of (2:2) award. I will need to hold a B grade in English at GSCE level and Mathematics, with a C grade in science.	Teacher Status. The website conveys that the degree consists of one year and is situated within University of Wales Saint Trinity, where it can take place in Swansea. They also state students will develop a mixture of modules where I could gain a deep and broad knowledge of learning and teaching.	
3. Skills Additional learning needs	Whilst working in a primary school, I am continually a one to one with children who have additional needs. I would like to develop my skills further by learning the best practice	This can be enabled by me shadowing the SENCO officer in work or applying to go on the Additional learning needs course via schools.	If shadowing was to take place, I would have to speak to the Headteacher beforehand. Speaking to the SENCO officer also to ask to go on an additional	As soon as possible.

	for these children and how to develop them further and myself.		learning course. Just like Vygotsky's scaffolding, he enhanced the ability to work together as a team to achieve the skills to develop further.	
4. Skills Critical thinking skills	There has sometimes been feedback on my assignments where I need to back up my evidence or make my assignment writing flow better. By further developing this, I feel like it can help me in my workplace if for instance I had to write a report for a meeting or a letter for parents/guardians.	I can help myself by being supported by student services in the university or asking a friend/family member to look over at my work when submitting.	Student services at University of Wales Trinity Saint David. There is no cost for this, just a professional service providing advice and information for all students.	No additional date.
5. Values Ethical practice	To continue my ethical code of conduct in my workplace and	Further shadow colleagues and ask for guidance when needed. Engage	This can be applied in setting and asking for	As soon as.

	further develop and enhance my professional expertise. Palaiologou (2012) expresses that it is evolved from how practitioners keep an upright practice for all children so I feel it is important for myself to enhance it and continue to do so in my setting.	with a witness in the setting when a situation occurs, so they are modelling to me on what to do.	permission from Headteacher or teacher before shadowing/modelling starts.	
6. Values Equality	I would like to enhance equality throughout my setting, where Lane (20008) conducts that all children have the right to not be subjected by prejudice and attitudes, so I feel empowered by this to express it throughout the setting.	Revisiting school policies on discrimination and enhancing my learning by looking at information on the United Nations on the Rights of the Child. I can continue to actively promote multicultural in lessons by working with the teacher when promoting special days, for	Throughout the school and having talks with the teacher in the classroom and how we can promote equality throughout our lessons.	As soon as possible.

		example Eid, Chinese New Year. Making sure that all learning methods do not discriminate against anyone and are adapted necessary e.g large print.		
7. Other? Welsh medium language course	As being a practitioner in a primary school, there is a continuum emphasis on talking to the children in welsh and enhancing it in the Foundation Phase. In the Foundation Phase (2015) they state that practitioner should continually expose children to Welsh and be encouraged to communicate in it. I feel a Welsh course would benefit me in this	University of Wales Saint Trinity David offer an intense course on their program where the course will give me a firm basis of the language and language acquisition.	The course consists of £230, where you are set into different groups of ability.	9 th -13 th of July 2018.

	way as I've always been interested in learning it further and it will make me feel more confident when directing it to the children.			
--	---	--	--	--

References

- Bassot, B. (2016) *The reflective practice guide: an interdisciplinary approach to critical reflection*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bilton, H. (2010) *Outdoor learning in the early years: management and innovation*. London: Routledge.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R. and Walker, D. *Promoting reflection in learning: a model*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Brown, N. (2017) 'Reflective model according to Rolfe et al' <http://www.nicole-brown.co.uk/reflective-model-according-to-rolfe/> [Accessed: 5th June 2018].
- Dolya, V. (2010) *Vygotsky in action in the early years: the 'key to learning' curriculum*. London: Routledge.
- Estyn. (2011) 'An evaluation of the implementation of the Foundation Phase for five to six-year-olds in primary schools, with special reference to literacy' <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/1109estynfpen.pdf> [Accessed: 8th June 2018].
- Edwards, A. (2000) *Research and Practice: is there a dialogue? Early Childhood Services: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ekebergh, M. (2007) 'Lifeworld-based reflection and learning: a contribution to the reflective practice in nursing and nursing education', *Reflective Practice*, 8(3), pp.331-343.
- Finlay, L. (2008) *Reflecting on reflective practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Forrest, M. (2008) 'On becoming a critically reflective practitioner', *Health information and journals*, Volume 25, Issue 3, pp.229-232.
- Forest School. (no date) 'Assisting Forest School- Level 2' <https://www.forestschooolsnpt.org.uk/training/agored-cymru-level-2-assistants-course/> [Accessed: 16th June 2018].

Foundation Phase. (2015) 'Curriculum for Wales'
<https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150803-fp-framework-en.pdf> [Accessed: 17th June 2018].

Husebo, S., O'Regan, S. and Nestel, D. (2015) 'Reflective Practice and its role in simulation', *Theory for simulation*, Volume 11, Issue 8, pp. 368-375.

Johns, C. (2013) *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lane, J. (2008) *Young children and racial justice: taking action for racial equality in the early years - understanding the past, thinking about the present, planning for the future*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Lindon, J. (2012) *Reflective practice and early years professionalism*. London: Hodder Education.

McFarland, L., Saunders, R. and Allen, S. (2009) 'Reflective Practice and Self-Evaluation in Learning Positive Guidance: Experiences of Early Childhood Practicum Students', *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(6), pp.505–511.

Moon, J.A. (2013) *Reflection in learning and professional development: Theory and practice*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Millington, A. (2013) 'Reflective Practice', *The Optician*, Volume 246, Issue 6429, pp. 20.

Munby, H. and Russell, T. (2006) 'Educating the reflective teacher: An essay review of two books by Donald Schon', *Journal of curriculum Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 1, pp. 71-80.

Oxford Brookes University. (2018) 'Reflective writing: About Gibbs reflective cycle'
<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/reflective-writing-gibbs/> [Accessed: 13th June 2018].

Paige-Smith, A. and Craft, A. (2011) *Developing reflective practice in the early years*. Berkshire, England: McGraw Hill.

Page, L. (2013) *Reflective practice*. Cambridge: Policy Press.

Palaiologou, I. (2012) *Ethical practice in early childhood*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Roffey-Barentsen, J. and Malthouse, R. (2013) *Reflective practice in education and training*. California: Learning Matters.

The Foundation Phase. (2015) 'Curriculum for Wales'
<https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150803-fp-framework-en.pdf> [Accessed: 30th May 2018].

University of Wales Trinity Saint David. (2018) 'PGCE Primary with QTS'
<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/pgce-primary/> [Accessed: 18th June 2018].