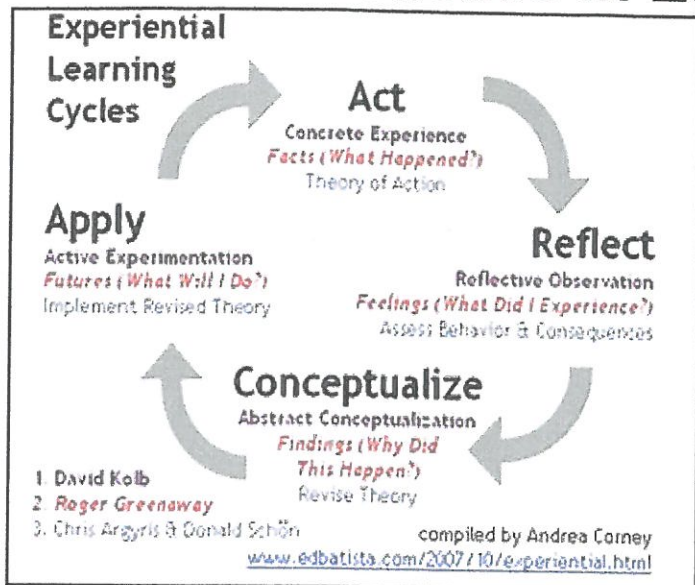


Reflective Practice in Early Years



Purposeful Reflection is a natural human action where people recollect their thoughts and experiences of a situation and evaluate how they could do things differently to achieve a better outcome. Boud et al (1985).

Pollard (2005) implies that 'Reflective Action' involves a readiness to actively critic oneself through self appraisal to strengthen social and self-awareness.

What is Reflective Practice?

The name 'reflective practice' originates from the work of Dewey (1910) and Schon (1983).

Dewey (1910) advises us that reflective practice is 'the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'. What this means is that practitioners will be required to question and consider all things such as why things happen and how these could be improved by developing critical thinking skills and behaviours which should be purposefully planned and informed by experience and theory.

Schon (1983) perceives reflection as having two aspects reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.

Reflection-in-action refers to your reaction as things happen and how you respond to this, for instance adapting an activity with children to encourage engagement by reframing a question to prompt understanding.

Reflection-on-action is when you re-run events in your mind and consider what happened, what options were available

and how you could have done things differently. Your ability to reflect will depend on your knowledge, experience and understanding of theories and values.

Kolb (1984) builds on philosophical and theoretical advances of Piaget and Vygotsky. In Kolb's theory of experiential learning he defines learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'. His learning theory is based on a four-stage learning cycle in which he proposes a way to enable you to understand individual learning styles, which he claims occurs between each stage of his reflective cycle.

Concrete Experimentation	Feeling
Reflective Observation	Watching
Abstract Conceptualization	Thinking
Active Experimentation	Doing

The beneficial factors of this model are the way it focuses on individuals and considers their different learning styles, whilst simultaneously offering you the opportunity to choose to **emotionally transform the experience** into something meaningful and useful

CRITICAL THINKING TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

(Hobson (2002) and Jones and Straker (2006) suggests that regular critical reflection is required to develop professional judgement and is reinforced by experimenting with different ideas and approaches from theory, practice and research.

This reflective process involves a combination of inquisitive, analytical and reflective approaches. It requires you to be challenging in practice by testing out new ideas and having the self-assurance to act on the results with confidence Crawley (2005)

REFLECTING ON OWN PRACTICE

Reflective practice is commonly related with professions such as early years, education and nursing and acts as a learning tool for personal and professional development and growth.

Working with children and young people requires practitioners to develop their skills by learning from experience to improve standards, values and workplace performance. Using reflective practice with others supports shared sustained thinking, quality of service and provision and supports a harmonious working environment.



Dera (2016) draws attention to the expectations of level 5 trained leaders in Flying Start provisions and **Rodd (2010)** concurs the critical need for strong leadership skills when working within early years.

Reflection is an essential part of your personal development plan (PDP) and you may be unaware that you use reflection every day in practice.

- Enhancing areas for play
- Making changes to practice after an incident
- Planning for individual needs

The aim of reflection is not to burden you with additional work, but to support the time you have devoted in preparing your PDP by offering you an opportunity to maximise professional development and understanding and enable you to be recognised and valued within your team.

THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

ABILITY TO REFLECT?

Stroobants (2009) explores the characteristics of humour and the impact of fun and banter within the workplace to support reflective practice, which he claims can yield significant results and Maslow (1954) concurs that to achieve self-actualization a person must have their basic needs met to enable them to engage successfully with reflection.



John Dewey (1859-1952) quoted that 'Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself.'

THE BENEFITS OF TAKING TIME TO REFLECT

Encourages individuals to really think about a situation in a deep and meaningful manner and recording your findings supports evaluation of your provision and quality of care report.

Try using various models when reflecting to become more effective and experimental with learning to support the rational of your own decision making processes.

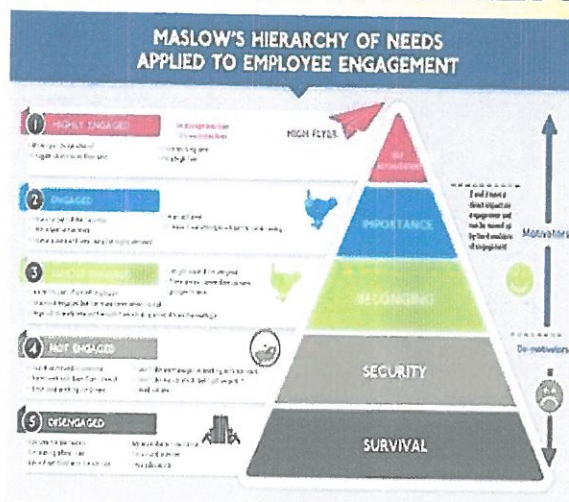
Supports the individual to be open and honest in making connections between what they do, what they say and how it makes them feel.

Develops an ability to critically review past and future actions by recognising, identifying and valuing achievements, which further supports personal practice and service evaluation.

Develops an awareness of professional boundaries and safeguard measures to protect individuals making impetuous decisions that could cause harm or disrepute to them and the organisation.

Care Inspectorate Wales (2016)

The National Minimum Standards regulations 13.10 and 13.11 informs us that staff must receive opportunities for regular training and supervision to meet individual needs and encourage them to review and reflect upon their daily practice. Using standardised forms to support this process in practice will allow service users, staff and volunteers to have their voices heard to inform provision.



TOP TIPS FOR REFLECTION

Reflection can be difficult for individuals who have a lack of understanding of its principle function to strengthen your daily practice, especially if you are new to the workforce. Linton (2010) informs us of the importance of reflection in early years' provision and suggests that success can only be achieved when reflection is practiced.

Consider the way you work.

Reflecting on positive and negative experiences can help increase your confidence and understanding.

Strive for excellence.

To improve the quality of your practice, provision and the care you offer others.

Be proactive

Reflection is considered a professional competence and through practice can boost your self-esteem and well-being.

Reflection is everyone's business

Remember to involve service users, professionals, colleagues and children as their involvement is paramount to your own personal development.

Why reflection is used

Remember reflection can be used to answer questions or find solutions to something that may not have simple solution.

Brookfield (2012) claims that critical thinking is questioning your own hypothesis to identify the difference between what is and what you believe. Using his term 'Critical lenses' he suggests writing your reflection from various viewpoints incorporating professional theory to improve your skill set.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

ESTYN (2016) seeks to make a judgement on the impact of good leadership skills by evaluating how effective they are in communicating to staff the high expectations and responsibilities placed upon them to improve outcomes and provision.

Leaders are expected to show that they use appropriate methods to monitor and encourage staff to set targets through effective review and appraisal systems. Targets must be SMART and realistic and should be regularly reviewed as part of supervision and appraisal. There must be a robust system in place to address poor performance and effective training and development measures are available to support ongoing learning.

Elfen 2 Log adfyfyriol – Element 2 Reflective log

Disgrifiad byr o'r gweithgaredd (dim mwy na 50 o eiriau) Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words)	
Following an earlier activity about animals and their habitats, I plan to discuss the similarities between animals and human beings and how our basic needs are met.	
Nod/Amcan y gweithgaredd	Aim/Objective of the activity
To encourage the children to compare the similarities between themselves and animals and gain a deeper understanding of what we all need to stay happy and healthy. This activity will be linked to the Foundation Phase Curriculum: Personal and Social development, Wellbeing and Cultural diversity and Knowledge and understanding of the world. • Explore humans and animals and their needs including food, water and appropriate housing. Maslow (1954). • Who looks after us when we become ill. • Why we must respect living things.	
Eich rôl chi	Your role
• To be supportive to all participants. • Plan the activity and resources and pitch at an appropriate level • Teach at a pace relevant to their stage. • Adapt the environment to ensure that all children can participate. • Observe, record and value each child's contribution • Ensure the activity is well supported by colleagues • Encourage children to share their views openly, valuing their opinions and choices. • Support children to be independent in their thinking and creativity • Review and reflect throughout the activity to meet its objectives aim (Schon 1983) 'In action'. • Be a positive role model and be mindful of children's history and family structure. • Consider children who are nervous of animals. • Ensure a broad balance between adult and child led activities that support and scaffold effective learning (Jerome Bruner).	
Agweddau cadarnhaol – pam?	Positive aspects – why?
The children appeared very eager and excited to participate in the activity and I used a introduced a box of resources, including various types of pets soft, hard and scented and small world people from around the world including those with physical impairments. We sat on the mat and explored the boxes and discussed who had pets, their names and funny things that they do. The discussion led towards walking pets	

and we extended the activity to the outdoors as 2 children shared an experience of a farm visit. Several children used hand held mirrors to compare similarities such as hair colour and others looked at a picture book containing different types of food and discussed their likes and dislikes and that of their pets. Children showed confidence in transporting equipment from one area to another and the majority showed respect and patience. Children took turns in speaking about themselves and their pets, including "grandads favourite spider".	
Agweddau heriol – pam?	Challenging aspects – why?
The activity had its challenges as 1 child did not have a pet and during part of the discussion, seemed a little detached. I believe a missed out on some key information as most children wanted me to face them and be totally involved in their learning by offering my undivided attention. I therefore found it difficult writing up notes. Some children did not want to share the resources resulting in a small incident where I was required to stop the activity and reinforce rules and boundaries and the importance of sharing. Some children had language difficulties in expressing themselves and the activity went on longer than planned, resulting in 2 children becoming a little restless.	
Pa cyberdeath arddangoswyd?	What knowledge was demonstrated?
Most children had pets and had some understanding of their needs. One child did not have the experience to share information but was able to revisit an early activity regarding farm animals and discussed the ducks within the group. Most children participated and shared personal views, many had a basic understanding that we all need food and water to survive and most talked about similarities between pets and themselves. One child commented that her polar bear teddy lives needs to live in the snow in an igloo and wears ice skates because it's slippery. Most children knew the function of body parts and their uses and several discussed similar pet groups and the tricks that they perform such as high 5. Most children understood that pets are living creatures and one child knew that dogs must not be given chocolate as it makes them sick. Most children understood that the vet doctor was like a GP and that you have medicine when you are feeling poorly.	
Pa sgiliau arddangoswyd?	What skills were demonstrated?
Skills demonstrated by the children included: • Respect towards each other.	

- Ability to express and communicate different feelings and emotions – their own and those of others.
- Curiosity and positive attitudes towards their peers and the activity.
- Confident to discuss the likes and dislikes of friends.
- Empathy towards a peer who had an injured puppy.
- Ability to respond to ideas and questions enthusiastically.
- Good use of language skills when talking
- Working co-operatively with each other.
- Patience to those with communication difficulties
- Mathematical language referring to body parts and that of their pets, including descriptive words little, small, big.
- Show an understanding of personal hygiene.
- Matching, sorting and identifying colours through verbal or non-verbal means.
- Ability to follow instructions and use problem solving skills.
- Use some Welsh words to describe colours and body parts.
- Able to recall and recite familiar songs making links to the activity.
- Identify health foods for human and animals
- Compare, contrast and identify that some children and animals have different needs.

Pa werthoedd arddangoswyd?
demonstrated?

Which values were

- Respect and understanding - I made eye contact with each child, listened to them and allowed them the time they needed to share their views and valued their input.
- Manners - Saying please and thank you and encouraging the children likewise when sharing resources.
- Identity – Calling each child by their chosen name.
- Caring disposition – I remained jovial, smiling and welcomed each child.
- Participation – I was flexible in my teaching approach, to ensure each child was able to participate.
- Patience – Followed the child's lead to ensure they had the time needed to complete the task.
- Safety – Ensuring the environment was welcoming to each child felt secure.

Beth allai cael ei wneud yn wahanol? Pam?
What could have been done differently? Why?

I should have critically considered the level of my involvement and the children's desire in wanting my attention. A timer could have supported children with sharing difficulties and time aside could have been offered to the child without a pet to help her prepare for the activity to reduce their anxieties.

A discussion with staff could have supported me in writing up observations and enabling me to offer differentiated learning opportunities with additional resources for those children with language difficulties to reduce delivery time and support delivery time and support individual learning styles more effectively.

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge To look at attending a PGCE on completion of my BA Hons in Early Years and Education.	- To further my career and to complement my assessors award and PTLLS award. - To receive teacher status and recognition.	- Attend lectures to help my level of academic understanding. - Complete my BA Hons. - Look at funding opportunities through community sources and grant funding.	- Contact Mandy Evans at Coleg Y Cymoedd to enquire about courses. - Speak to local Primary schools regarding placement opportunities - Look to UWTSO for further information.	- June 2018 - June 2019 - May 2019
2. Knowledge Develop an in-house training centre for training and development.	- We have identified that training is limited to apprentices or non- Flying Start staff members. - To raise the calibre of staff skills and competency to improve standards. - Raise the profile of the organisation. - Offer courses externally.	- Undertake a training audit on staff needs to identify the type of training required. - Develop a competency framework to monitor performance and price. - Become a peer Mentor to obtain funding for wages to support the project. - Advertise appropriately within the community offering free short courses for parents and carers to support company image.	- Obtain training records for staff from RCTCBC and agencies providing apprentices. - Work with Wend Davies HR consultant to develop a performance framework. - Complete forms with Coalfields Regeneration (Michelle) and copyright. - Tania Oliver CCID to look at current market to identify needs. Offer Heart Start wales life support training for free to service users.	- August 2018 - Sept 2018 - Sept 2018 - Oct 2018
3. Skills Time Management	Struggling to maintain healthy work/life balance which is impacting my time available for university work	Attend a course to avoid continuous firefighting and consider relooking at lifestyle changes.	- Speak to Palladium training to enquire as to what courses are available - Consider on line shopping to allow more study time.	ASAP

4. Skills Reference Skills	• Improve my ability to reference more effectively as this takes up most of my time. • To have my eyes checked asap as reading is becoming more challenging.	• Ensure I keep an active log as I am reading. • Keep practicing and checking the handbook. • Email tutors and ask for feedback.	• Record and be pro-active when referencing. • Blow handbook up to bigger font if required. • Access Study Skills Class if required or speak to the Disability Team for help when needed.	• ASAP • Awaiting outcome of needs assessment July 18
5. Values Be Supportive	• Remain supportive to staff in my role as manager, offering guidance when needed.	• Maintain an open-door policy that develops trust and respect.	• Allocate drop in sessions for staff to share or discuss personal or work - related problems. • Ensure well-being reviews are completed regularly and monitored.	• Sept 2018
6. Values Recognition and reward	• Offer incentives to support team development • Praise achievements and recognise development	• Area managers to encourage staff to participate in company incentives to boost moral and team spirit. • Encourage teams to share achievements via the universal whatsapp and Facebook to service users can join in their success.	• Set up a budget of £10 per month for individual employee of month in each team and gifts for specific achievements. • Contact local companies for discounted rates of staff luncheon days. • Arrange team building days and functions.	• Following August 2018 budget allocation • ASAP • Termly 3/year.
7. Other? Reduction in working hours	• To help me achieve my ambitions and to encourage me to train up a new prodigy.	• Arrange 121 meeting with proposed prodigy and share my vision for the future.	• Arrange for AV to consider shadowing me for 2 months to gain an understanding of the post. • Delegate small parts of role and coach her to release small parts of her existing post.	• August 2018.

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