What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect/review your own work to get positive outcomes (Forde *et al*. 2006 quoted in Brock 2014 pg8).

Hargreaves and Paige (2013) state that in the nineteenth century reflective practice was not understood like the way it is now. They state that during the industrial revolution a scientific method was formed, this method was used for many years which consisted of observing and measuring which then led to prediction and control. Furthermore, Hargreaves and Paige (2013) state that this scientific method started to become viewed as more important knowledge than any other until Donald Schon questioned the theory in the twentieth century and created reflective practice. However, Hargreaves and Paige (2013) communicate that although Schons theory (1983) is more common in recent years, practitioners have still used the scientific method in specific circumstances as they believe that was the easier route to take and was more likely to gain things such as funding rather than using the qualitive method that Schon created.

Brock (2014) states that reflective practice is a process within yourself or with others that allows you to reflect on situations that have already occurred. He also believes that reflective practice is something that should be used daily as this allows you to continuously improve within your own development and work setting. Additionally, Rinaldi (2016, quoted in brock 2014 p9) agrees with this statement and believes that reflective practice is a dialogic process within yourself or with others that allows you to listen or discuss different perspectives. HCPC (2021) Discuss the benefits of reflection within yourself and others and believes that reflecting by yourself is beneficial as it can allow you to develop a growth within your own self development, another advantage is that this can be flexible, which allows you to form an outcome based on your own preferences and time scale. They then go onto discuss that reflection with others is important especially when working with multi agencies as it allows you to look at things from other people's viewpoints which will result in a collective wisdom on the participants experiences.

Gasper (2015) States that reflective practice consists of the involvement of a professional and other participants, this includes various levels of communication whilst listening, talking and then adapting to meet the needs of the participants such as whether it is emotional or something physical. The participants could include:

- Colleagues
- Children
- Parents
- Clients

Gasper (2015) states that the reflective cycle involves the professional questioning what they sense, for example what they hear and think and then having the ability to share their own opinion and views to the other people involved. He also suggests using a journal for reflection so that you are able to review what has occurred which allows you to analyse and reflect, he states that by writing it down it allows you to broaden your mind and challenge your initial thoughts which you would not tend to do if you had not written it on paper, this allows you to be able to move forward.

Brock (2014) talks about the importance of a specific form of reflection which is called critical reflection. He states that this type of reflection includes gathering ideas and issues whilst also having the ability to critically think. Fook and Gardner (2007 quoted in Brock 2014 p14) state that this form of reflection consists of a mixture of theoretical and practical knowledge which enables empowerment, professional development and the ability to manage problems and worries.

Reflective practice theories and models

Schon (2016) discusses the two types of practitioners that support reflective practice, one being tacit and the other being technical. He believes that many professional practitioners do not need to have the facts to know when something else is going on and discusses that many practitioners can just have that gut feeling without needing any evidence to back this up, this is known as tacit knowledge. Furthermore, Klein (2018) states that tacit knowledge consists of pattern recognition, mental models and judging typicality. Schon (2016) talks about how when you have seen the same situation repeat many of times you tend to use your intuition. He also states that opposite to this method of reflection, technical practitioners tend to rely on evidence and facts which show solid proof that there is a reason for everything they do. He believes that these practitioners tend to avoid getting involved in the unknown but are the people you would tend to go to in the case of an emergency as they have the knowledge of precures, policies and experience.

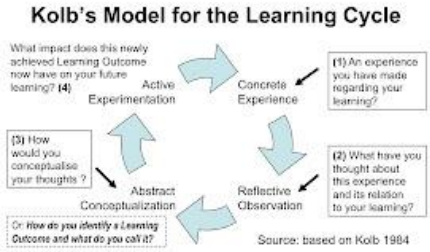
Hargreaves and Paige (2013) discuss how Schon noticed there was a hierarchy in professional practitioners and how the recognition towards knowledge and theory was put first above anything else. They discuss how Schon wanted to focus on experience and hands on practice in the workplace instead and noticed that eventually the practitioners began to adapt a more professional status by being practical. Hargreaves and Paige (2013) believe that throughout the years the need for knowledge and skill has lessened and by having practice and skills at the beginning of your profession it is now more preferred. On the other hand, Eruat (1994 quoted in brock 2014 p12) argues that theorical knowledge is just as important as practical knowledge and that he believes that they need to go hand in hand together as by also using theoretical methods alongside practical methods it allows you to generate a deeper knowledge and cognitive understanding that would be missing if you did one or the other separately.

The university of Edinburgh (2021) states that Gibbs' model of reflection is one of the most famous cycles of reflection and believes it is all about how you feel during and after a situation has occurred. The talk about how Gibbs' cycle consists of the six steps which include the description, how you felt, evaluation, analysis, the action plan you need to create to avoid or see what you would change if it would happen again in the future and then the conclusion. Expert program management (2018) Believe that this model is extremely effective as it is simple to follow, has no time limit as it allows you to learn and understand over a period of time which then gives you more of a balanced approach to decide on the potential outcome.

All answers (2018) mention Driscoll's model of reflection and explains how it is one of the simpler models. The cycle includes the steps named what, so what and now what. The three steps are there so that you can explain the situation, reflect on what you learnt

from that experience and then the last step is about how you could change your behaviour. All answers (2018) state that by following these three steps it will allow you to not only analyse/reflect on future situations but also learn from the current situation. All assignment help UK (2020) States that unlike Gibbs model of reflection, Driscoll's cycle allows you to get a quick fix on the situation/ incident, although this cycle is not recommended for deep/extensive reflection, they believe that this model is one of the simpler ones and advise that anyone who is new to reflection uses this cycle as it is easier to understand in comparison to other models and discusses the fact that the expected questions involved tend to be simpler which allows you to come to a conclusion faster.

FourweekMBA (no date) States that Kolb's cycle was originated in 1984 and is known as the experiential cycle which allows you to learn through action, the cycle is also known as the holistic approach to reflective thinking. The cycle consists of four stages which are experiencing, observing, conceptualising and experimenting. These stages are all in place to enable you to create your own theories and understand how to handle future situations if they should arise.



Source: Blogger (2011)

Reflection in early years

DfES (2006 quoted in Paige-smith and Craft 2011 p24 and 25) state that when practitioners reflectively think it allows them to understand why the theories and policies are put in place. They also state that, in previous years, reflective practice was only a key element to the graduate teaching status, however this has now changed and reflective practice has also started to be implemented into the early years professional status which shows the growing need for reflection in the early years.

Brodie and savage (2015) discuss the importance of inclusive practice as a form of reflection in the early years, they state that by participating or conducting inclusive practice in the workplace it allows relationships to develop, promotes diversity and shows leadership and teamwork. Similarly, to this, Collier (2021) also states the benefits of inclusive practice. They believe that this form of reflection promotes equality, a higher self-image and empathy because they recognise that no person is the same but by having the ability to reflect it allows them to come together and achieve more positive experiences.

Paige-smith and Craft (2011) state that there is a growing demand for early year practitioners to be able to reflectively think. In addition to this, Tarrant (2013) states that the person who should benefit the most from the situation is the one who is doing the reflecting. He then goes on to talk about the importance of reflective practice and the impact it has on practitioners which takes them to that step of becoming professionals, he talks about how the control and ownership allows you to spot your strengths and weaknesses which makes you capable to improve your own development.in addition to this Brock (2014) agrees and states that reflection is about the ability to analyse different perspectives to get a positive result. He discusses that reflection is important in the Early Childhood Care and Education institution as it improves your practice and forms a knowledge and skill which allows you to understand children, other staff and care givers more efficiently. Brock (2014) also states that practitioners cannot always know everything, he then goes on to discusses the many barriers in the way of this such as change, expectations and other issues arising on a day-to-day basis and how because of this reflective practice is needed in the early years to come to a solution.

Aistear (2019 quoted in Longford 2021) discusses the Irish perspective on reflective practice within the early years and believes that reflective practice enables the practitioner to understand and plan the curriculum as they are able to notice the child's strengths and interests through observation and reflection. Similarly, to Brock (2014), Longford (2021) states that by reflectively thinking you are able to identify a better result by the end of it.

Conclusion

To conclude, brock (2010 quoted in Brock 2014) states that when things such as views, beliefs and subject knowledge are reflected upon, professionality is created. He believes that by having the ability to reflect it will result in a more positive, qualitive practice and environment. Brock (2014) states that it important to reflectively think on a day to day basis because there is always new information, policies and practice that are continuously occurring, by doing so it allows you to adapt to the change and move forward as a professional. NSW government (2021) talks about the general overview of a reflective practice meeting/situation that could arise between a teacher and child and discusses what types of questions you could potentially ask. They discuss the importance of starting sentences with words such as what, how and when so that you can get the idea of everything you need to know rather than yes or no answers which will then likely give you the ability to create an outcome or next step that needs to be taken if there is any. In addition to this, Magnetic memory method (2021) states that by asking questions you are able to be aware of your experience and they believe that by having the ability to reflectively think you can improve relationships, improve your knowledge and lower your stress levels.

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