

Reflective Practice.

CIPD (2021) explains that reflective practice is the base of professional development, by using experience and transforming it for personal growth. When thinking about and reflecting on what one does, this is known as reflective practice. It is investigating their own beliefs and values and being inquisitive on reflecting and assessing how accurate the beliefs are. It is a cycle of continuous learning when practitioners stop, think and challenge their thoughts and practices in order to create new understandings to be able to develop children and young people's learning and development further. It enables them to enhance and deepen their learning, resulting in better knowledge for themselves and the children in their care. Reflective practice involves adjusting, thinking and drawing in new resources to see the views of others. Therefore, it is vitally important to be regularly researching, reading and focusing on the main points. There is an opportunity for improvement every time so therefore it is important to think about their work and how they can better it and take on new challenges.

Providing the highest level of care possible for children and young people is the main aim of practitioners so being a reflective practitioner is the best way to improve and maintain the quality of their care. It is crucial to be aware of their strengths but to also recognise where there is room for improvement. Improving their practice will result in better outcomes for the children and young people. For example, their individual needs are being met, an increase in self esteem and being in an interactive and appropriate setting.

Why?

For a practitioner to give the highest quality of care they need to be reflecting regularly, to make them aware of any improvements that they can develop for the next time. Reflection is carried out to critically review something. It is used to engage in personal development, aiding someone to become more self-aware. Making decisions can be made easier by reflecting as one may think about their past experiences and reflect to make new decisions for the next time. Reflection happens in every day life without people even realising, for example, practitioners sitting in the staffroom at lunch time discussing their morning, this is reflection.

How?

Pacey (2021) explains that there are often barriers involved in reflective practice and explores some of the useful tools.

The first tool is by having a reflective diary. Bolton 2014 explains how this is useful to be able to record a range of person developments, thoughts, experiences, emotions and reflections. Having a reflective diary is very useful as it will let them see the development in steps and allow them to look back over a period of time to see the changes.

Another tool would be to reflect on a recent activity by asking themselves what worked well? How and why? How can it be improved? A reflective practitioner is always looking for ways to improve their practice. There are many models to help with this tool providing steps on asking themselves appropriate questions.

Asking colleagues is a very useful way of reflecting, as they are able to discuss their practice, ask for feedback and listen to the views of someone else. They are able to discuss new ideas between colleagues and support each other. It is important not just to ask the colleagues but also to ask the parents too as they are able to provide them with some of the best feedback. Many settings provide their parents with a feedback form where the parents will fill in their person views. This will help the practitioners to see and make any changes, if appropriate, to benefit the child and their learning and development. It will also allow the parents to feel valued and involved as their say has been taken in to account.

Reflective Models

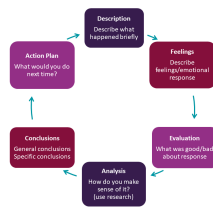
A reflective model is a process or cycle used by someone to reflect on his or her practice and to analysis for any improvement. There is no correct model for a practitioner to use; it is whatever one works best for them personally as there are many different ones to choose from. For example, Gibbs 1988, Schon 1991, Johns 2006, Kolb 1984, Driscoll mid-1990s.

Schon (1991), a professor of urban studies and education, explains how there are different types of reflected practice. The first concept is called 'knowing in action'; this is the known ability to perform the task prior to the experience. For example, it is like riding a bike; after someone has been taught how to ride a bike they will never have to reflect on how to do it next time as the knowledge has been gained. This concept benefits the practitioner with their self esteem and builds on their confidence as they already have the knowledge of what they are doing. The second concept is reflection in action, which is reflection during the event. This is typically a quick, on the spot, reflection during the experience itself. For example, if there is a child misbehaving in the setting the practitioner will carry out a rapid on the spot reflection on how to deal with the child and what is best to do in that current situation.

The last reflection is taken part after the event has happened, this is known as reflection on action. An example of when this would take place could be when a student is receiving their assignment marks back to them. The student will then read over the feedback given and then reflect on what they can do to improve for the next assignment that they hand in.

Gibbs (1988) created a framework that provides a structure for a reflective piece of writing called the reflective cycle. This cycle consist of six different stages to help reflect on their experience, helping them to understand what went well and what could have gone better. The first three steps of the cycle focus on what happened during the experience oppose to the last three steps that look at how to improve what happened in the

first three steps.



Although this framework has its advantages of being easy to use and understand, it also has a disadvantage of being reactive rather than practical. Also, some people may find step two challenging as this involves opening up about their feelings and many people will find this difficult to do.

Kolb (1984) also had a cycle of reflection, which has similarities to Gibbs (1988). It is a model that was created to aid people to learn from their past events. This cycle only contains four stages, requiring each one to be worked through before the cycle can repeat itself and lead to new experiences. The first stage is concrete experience; this requires a description and thoughts of the experience. The next stage is the reflective stage where thinking about the experience is required. The third stage is all about learning from experience, as it requires one to analyse and evaluate their reflection. This is the step where acknowledgement of what went well and what did not go well can be identified. The last stage is putting their reflection in to practice, using the evaluation carries this out and analysis to create plans to move forward. The stages then link back to stage one where new experiences are being made and the cycle then repeats itself. Kolb's theory of the cycle of reflection is an beneficial approach to teach new information. The practitioners that choose to use this method are able to take a range of learning styles into account when giving new resources to the children and young people in their settings.

Christopher John 2006 created a model known as Johns' model that involves two processes, which are looking in and looking out. The looking in process encourages practitioners to look at themselves and recall the event being analysed. They do this by writing a detailed piece of text about the situation, including emotions and thoughts. The looking out process is revolved around five questions different types of questions. The first set of questions is aesthetic questions where the practitioners question themselves on what they were trying to do. The next lot of questions is personal questions relating to self-examination. For example, what feelings were felt during the event? The third set of questions is ethical questions about the consistency of their actions. Contextual questions are used in the fourth stage where the practitioner is asked to take into account if there were any factors, environmental or not, involved during the event. Lastly, the reflective questions; this is when the practitioner is working through the evidence, observations and experiments and may ask themselves questions such as what could I have done differently? Johns' model is beneficial in the way of how it encourages reflection for practitioners by taking into account a range of factors and how the practitioner is encouraged to consider the implications of their actions on themselves and others. However, this model also has its disadvantages, as it does not concentrate on wide questions, only on the analysis of specific individual events.

A simpler model was created by Driscoll in the mid 90's which involved asking the three What's; What? So What? Now What? This process allows the practitioner to analyse their experiences and gain from the results that they receive. After the three What's have been asked, the last step is to evaluate the results and think about the action next taken is.

Whilst reflecting, there are many different models that can be used; some are more useful to some than others. The models prepare an effective guide to aid with reflecting, which each practitioner will view in their own way. As some of the models work better for others, it is useful to try many different strategies out to see which one is most appropriate and best suited to them.

There are many advantages to reflective practice such as it making the practitioner feel encouraged once seeing that they have been performing well as this will naturally want them to keep pushing themselves, as their confidence and self-esteem will be raised wanting them to progress further. Although reflective practice is extremely important in every day life with several benefits, many people do not do it and many of the models do have their disadvantages. The reason that some people do not carry out reflection is because they do not understand the process on how to reflect correctly. There are also a number of practitioners that do not like the process of reflection as it can involve them to feel feelings of vulnerability and defensiveness as they have deeper insights in to their practice. Another reason why some do not like to reflect is because they do not like the result leaving them to feel defensive resulting in them not wanting to learn improvements.

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