

Element 2 Activity Reflective Log**Activity Description**

The activity was created for children between the ages of two and three years old who are attending a Primary School's Nursery class. The activity took place on the classroom's playground and surrounding areas. However, we were also prepared to do the activity indoors in case weather became a barrier. Before the activity begun, the children were put into pairs and were instructed that there were ten coloured balls hidden throughout the playground and that they must explore the playground find them and then return to the starting point, this is going to allow them to develop in teamwork. Once all the balls were found the children were instructed to organise them into the hula hoop matching the balls colour (Yellow, Blue, Green, Red, White). Each hula hoop had a different number of balls in them, ranging from 1-5. To end the activity, the children had to count the balls in each colour hula hoop then organise them from the least amount to the highest amount of balls.

Activity Objective

The objective of my activity was to allow the children to learn through Play which is highly encouraged by Play Wales (2019) as well as the Foundation Phase Framework (2017). Therefore, I wanted to do an activity promoting this. I decided to carry out an activity promoting the children's mathematical, communication, problem solving skills by allowing them to explore their number counting, number recognition and ordering abilities.

My Role

Activity leader. Vygotsky (1978) highlights that the MKO refers to a person who has a better understanding and/or a higher ability level than a learner. My role was to educate the children on what they need to do for the activity, My role also meant I had to keep them stimulated and engaged throughout. Although many of the children are aware of the colours or numbers as activity leader it was my role to be there in order to answer any questions or navigate them in the right direction if they were struggling.

Positive Aspects

Throughout the activity the children communicated well in their pairs. They showed great determination regarding the exploration to find the coloured balls. Many of the children said afterwards that they enjoyed the physical element of the activity, beginning to end. Even more, the children who would not usually interact in class were more eager to get involved in discussing ideas and their thoughts, which really helped their confidence in taking part. This had a positive impact on my sense of achievement in my role as activity leader.

Challenging aspects
During the activity, a handful of the children showed some signs of difficulty regarding the counting and number ordering aspect. Also, the children would often get distracted easily, going off topic -leading them to lose concentration as well as motivation to carry on. The activity also took some pairs a while to complete this was because some of the children worked at different levels of knowledge. As a result, this meant it had to be done over a course of a longer period.
What knowledge was demonstrated?
I organised the activity working in line with the EYFS Framework (2017) therefore, I showed knowledge of curriculum and what activity I needed to organise in order for the children to get the best opportunity to develop and expand their current knowledge.
What skills and values were demonstrated?
Throughout the activity I carried out leadership, communication and problem-solving skills. Due to the fact I had to plan an activity, I also learnt many new creativity skills as I wanted to create an activity that was fun and stimulating. As the leader of the activity I communicated loudly and clearly throughout the to the children in order for them to gain understanding, I spent a lot of time repeating myself, encouraging verbally which took a lot of patience and determination. Furthermore, my role allowed me to develop Self-confidence and self-awareness skills that I may not have had prior this was because I was taking responsibility of many children (something I had not done as a team leader beforehand), stepping outside of my comfort zone. During the activity it was shown that the children worked at different levels of knowledge. I was non-judgemental and always patient throughout.
What could have been done differently? Why?
If I was to carry out this same activity again in the future, I would ask the class teacher for pairs who would encourage each other rather than compete. The activity was meant to promote the children's teamwork skills. I would also take into consideration a Risk assessment to assess the area that I'm carrying out the activity is safe and suitable for the children of the selected ages. In future I would also take into consideration if the activity is suitable for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Would they be able to complete the activity? Would they understand the terms they would need to meet?

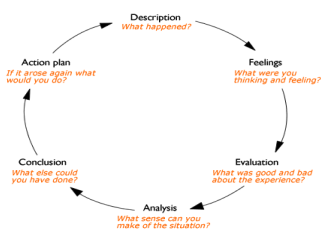
Reflective Practice

Leeson (2007) says that Reflective Practice should encourage practitioners to 'feel' for their work, an approach which breaks past the boundaries of observation as it challenges knowledge and practice which leads to moving practitioners to an area of better understanding. Agreeing with this, Maynard and Thomas (2009) believe that when practitioners assimilate different ways of thinking and working that it will enable them to gain further progression in their personal and professional views and ways of doing.

Brookfield (1995) has said that Early years practitioners work in a continuously evolving environment-They are faced with new ways and means to practice frequently whether it is through government -led policy changes and the numerous international influences – they are a profession in which reflection should be continuous. The development of professionalism within the interdisciplinary early years team by Brock (2011) highlights the seven dimensions of professionalism linking back to reflective practice are; Knowledge, Education and training, Skills, Autonomy, Values, Ethics, Reward.

Dewey (1938) Defined reflective thought as; Vigorously and continuously considering any belief or form of knowledge – looking at it from all angles to ensure contemplative outcomes. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) believe that Reflection allows development in personal satisfaction, relationship and social skills. Furthermore, it also boosts practitioners' interest and enjoyment in working as they feel there is a mutual respect between peers and that they are being listened to. As a practitioner when you reflect you are considering something you may not have thought to before. Boyd and Fales (1983) and Bleach (2014) believe this frequently allow you to learn, reflection is strongly analysing your experiences, emotions, behaviour and reactions in order for you to develop. This is usually done by following step by step guidelines or cycles. Cycles such as;

Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) published in "Learning by Doing: a Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods" is a cycle which was loosely developed based on Kolb's learning theory. However, is made up of six stages instead of Kolb's four.



Description - What happened in the activity?

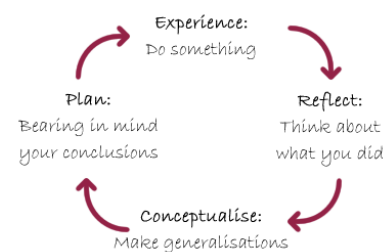
Feelings - What did you think and feel about it?

Evaluation - What were the positive and negative aspects?

Analysis - What sense can you make of?

Conclusion - What else could you have done?

Action Plan - What will you do next time?



Source: Oxford Brookes University (2019)

Source: Leeds Beckett University (2015)

Critical thinking is a cognitive activity and Smidt (2002) says critical thinking and reflective practice are often used simultaneously. Appleby (2010) says that this is because, in order to gain a better outcome in future experiences one must scrutinise every aspect; good or bad. However, you must also consider that the people involved have their own personal values, such as; Compassion, Family, Philanthropy, Friendship, Respect, Happiness, Faith, Accountability, Fitness/Health and Education.

Garnham and Oakhill (1994) says that most of our critical thinking can be biased, limited, uneducated and prejudiced and acknowledges that everything practitioners do depends on their quality of thoughts and values. Cottrell (2017) believes that practitioners could benefit from carrying out background research regarding peers, students etc. and as a result more informed judgements when considering applicable facts, explanations, options, emotions, personalities and therefore, avoiding bias and miscalculated outcomes can be made.

Cottrell (2017) has highlighted that many people lack the ability to be critical especially verbally. Agreeing with this, Bolton (2010) highlights that **NOT** everyone in a setting obtains identical reflective style. Expanding on this, Neaum and Tallack (1997) believe that we must remember that the differences between children and the similarities. VARK (2019) tests were developed in order to identify what learning and/or reflective style an individual has. It stands for Visual, Aural, Read/write, and Kinesthetic modalities and they can be used for learning information regarding peers, staff and colleagues.

Pacey (2019) have highlighted that for Early Years Settings to provide quality services they must consider and/or have the following in place;

- Staff must have a wide range of qualifications which allows them a higher depth of knowledge in order to provide the best care and opportunities for development. For example; First Aid, Food Hygiene, Childcare Qualification.
 - Staff must have an updated and clean Disclosure and Barring Services Certificate provided by Government UK (date unknown). This allows employers to be sure they are not hiring employees with criminal records and that they are suitable for the jobs at hand.
 - Setting need to provide a safe and hygienic environment. Risk assessment must be carried out and childcare setting must meet regulations put in place by ...
 - toys, equipment and resources must be good quality and provide lots of opportunities for play and learning, indoors and outdoors.
 - Days must be structured, organised and well managed at the setting.
 - Nutritious food for children to enjoy at sociable mealtimes.
 - Constructive communications – positive interactions must be provided.
 - Parents should be fully engaged and updated regarding their children's care.
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Flying Start (2014) research found that for them there are 3 key measures of quality to achieve a successful childcare setting. High quality environment; The environment should offer children large, small, safe and secure spaces, all of which should encourage growth in risk taking. Furthermore, this should allow children to have better attitude and behaviour towards play as-well as the outdoors. The outdoor and indoor spaces should be rich in providing stimulating areas working in line with Play Wales (2015). Also, High quality people; The highest calibre of staff must be appointed in order to deliver high quality care. The staff must have past experience working with children and must attain the required qualifications. If staff do not have the qualifications in place, staff must advise how and when they must require the qualifications and advisory staff must monitor progress. Staff must show children in the setting need continuity as they can show signs of increased frustration and social withdrawal may become apparent. Lastly, High quality experiences for the child; a similar philosophy and pedagogy of the Foundation Phase Framework (2015) must be provided in order to give children a smooth transition covering the same skills in order for them to begin their development in the Early Years. Staff must remember that each child is unique and should be categorised by what they can do not their age. Take all aspects of that into consideration when planning activities. Assessments must be completed, and outcomes must be relayed back to parents in order for them to be advised of any additional support.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are an independent regulator of social care and childcare. Care Inspectorate Wales (2019) believe that for practitioners to develop and grow in their professions they must reflect on their practice. For Early Years Settings such as Flying Start to know where they can and/or should improve on, they carry out detailed and regular inspections at the settings. CIW (2019) have a consistent process to the inspection procedure and have developed frameworks to follow when carrying out inspections. They have stated that when they carry out inspections at childcare settings, they will consider four core themes: Well-being, Care and Development, Environment and Leadership and Management. An example of their inspection framework can be seen on Appendix 1.

To conclude, It has been highlighted that reflection should allow practitioners to think both systematically and critically about their practice; good or bad, personally or professionally, independent or with guidance.

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area of Development	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
<i>To do master's in Play Therapy</i>	I wish to get a master's degree as a child play therapist, in order to broaden my experiences ready for any future jobs.	Going to University for further studying by Applying through UCAS or speaking to the university themselves.	University South Wales offers a master's Course for Play Therapy over a course of two years.	Apply Summer 2020 – the year I hope to graduate from UWTSD with BA Hons – Early Years Education and Care. I hope to gain a place on the course by September 2021.
<i>Get a job as a Local Government Officer</i>	I would like a job in this field of work because although it can be difficult and a long process for some people involved, I do believe the job can be rewarding. Furthermore, I believe it is a job where no two days will be the same and each day comes with a different challenge which I exceed in.	Applying for jobs. Some Local Authorities (such as Carmarthenshire County Council) take students on for work experience placements, which can be a useful resource, also it helps better chance for a job in the long term.	Carmarthenshire County Council (2018)	If I graduate from my masters in Play therapy, It will help me have another qualification linked to the job role, that way, can apply for jobs or volunteer as soon as June/ July 2022.
<i>Get my driving license</i>	Working in the profession of early years & aiming to get a job as an LGO, a lot of the jobs are community based throughout Carmarthenshire-Llanelli, Cross Hands,	I have been and will continue to revise my theory until confident. I will save up to pay for insurance and a new car.	Local (Carmarthen) driving instructor 'Tracey L Pass' charges £240 for a block of 10 lessons.	I already have small, short but brief lessons with the family friend. I aim to buy a block of 10 lessons by the end

	Ammanford. Therefore, I wish to get my driver's license.			of February to begin with and if I need more, the I have another month or so to save more money.
<i>Employability</i>	Employability skills are something that employers take into consideration. After I graduate, they will look for skills I hold as well as the degree I have. Therefore, it is something I will need in order to secure a job in future.	Every lecture I attend means I check off a Knowledge or Practical Skill in my NOS log. If I am unable to attend lectures they can also be done through work and activities carried out in placement.	There are various ways in which I can improve employability skills. Practice interviews with staff, friends or family. Look for various way in which I can gain more certifications or Qualities employers may find useful.	During my time at university and outside. I have started volunteering for a mammy & me group to expand my experience with young babies and children.
<i>Kindness</i>	Kindness is free. People are different, and we don't know whether a simple act of kindness will be the one think to make their day a better one.	This can be done by paying compliments to people, helping someone do a simple or hard task, listening to someone, asking someone how their day has been. The list is endless...	I believe that this can be done everywhere to anyone you decide.	All the time! As much as I possibly can!
<i>Loyalty/ Trust</i>	Loyalty gives people especially children a feeling of support or allegiance. If I am a loyal person, people I am involved with, work with, live with will trust me.	Let adults or children know that I want to help them, that I am happy to take the time to listening to their problems, worries, good times etc, make suggestions for their future in certain situations.	Loyalty takes pace when someone asks me for advice or to do something for them.	It is important that you stay loyal throughout a relationship. The only time you should consider being disloyal is if he person has made you aware that they wish to harm themselves or others around. For example; in most settings there is a safeguarding officer so if I were to have any concerns over a child or

				anyone, I may know they are the ones to speak to.
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