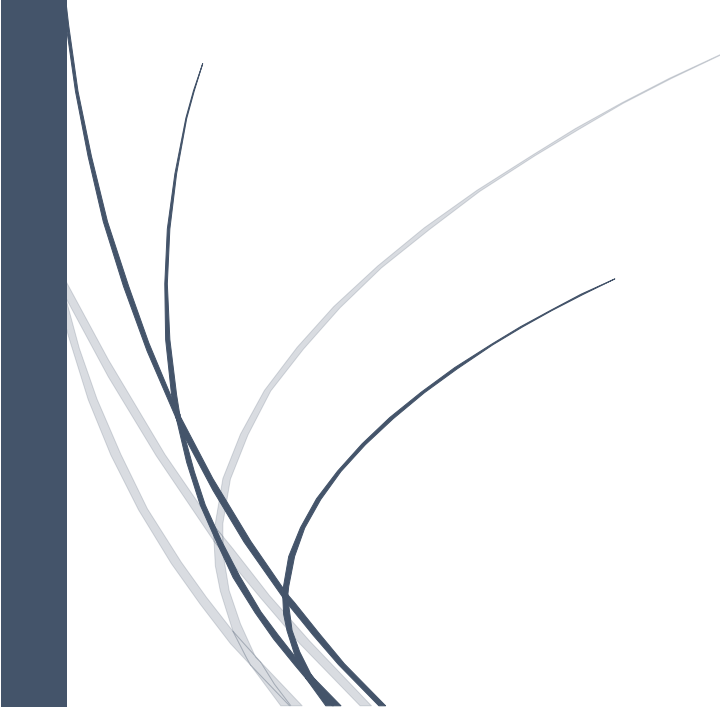




6/22/2018

Reflections on Early Years Provision

EAEE5002C



Sarah James (1706410)
UWTSD

Reflective Log

REFLECTIVE LOG :	Disgrifiad byr o'r gweithgaredd (dim mwy na 50 o iriau) Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words)
Eight children (four – six year olds) completing a photocopied worksheet of 15 mixed adding/ subtracting problems to the value of 20 whilst sat at a table in the indoor classroom area.	
Nod/ Amcan y gweithgaredd	Aim/objective of the activity
Using number skills and written methods to demonstrate an understanding of mathematical symbols for addition, subtraction and equals by calculating and solving problems (Welsh Government, 2015).	
Eich rol chi	Your role: Assisting class teacher, leading group of eight children
To support the children in the completion of a photocopied sheet of mixed addition/ subtraction problems.	
Agweddau cadarnhaol – pam?	Positive aspects – why?
1. All children completed the task. 2. Most children understood the objective of the task although some required additional support.	

Agweddau heriol – pam?	Challenging aspects – why?
1. Unaware of children's developmental stage (including prior learning, additional learning needs, etc). 2. Experienced difficulty in implementing the task as was not aware of the lesson plan or the task prior to sitting down to complete the task with the children. 3. Children were of mixed abilities which made completing the task difficult. Some were using fingers and making marks as counting strategies whilst others were using verbal and mental strategies in order to solve the problems.	
Pa wybodaeth arddangoswyd?	What knowledge was demonstrated?
1. I was able to draw upon the theoretical knowledge gained from the Young Mathematician module to assist in the delivery of the task. 2. I was also able to draw upon the experience gained from helping my own children with their maths homework. 3. Combining my knowledge and experience I was able to use mathematical key words, age appropriate vocabulary and words of praise and encouragement to support the children whilst completing the task.	
Pa sgiliau arddangoswyd?	What skills were demonstrated?
1. Effective communication skills - active listening, observing, building rapport, verbal and non-verbal communication skills were used to put the children at ease and in the correct frame of mind so that they would engage with the task. Tailoring responses by taking the situation and each child into account (Prozesky, 2000).	

Pa werthoedd arddangoswyd?	Which values were demonstrated?
1. Inclusion and participation – ensuring that the task was communicated to each child in such a way that they were able to understand and complete the task by using differentiation strategies to enable each pupil to access the task according to their ability and existing subject knowledge. 2. Patience – remaining calm and focused, being able to break the task down into smaller understandable stages and using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. 3. Responsibility – understanding that my role was to enable the children to understand the mathematical concepts complete the task so enabling the children to aquire the knowledge required to repeat it.	1. Inclusion and participation – ensuring that the task was communicated to each child in such a way that they were able to understand and complete the task by using differentiation strategies to enable each pupil to access the task according to their ability and existing subject knowledge. 2. Patience – remaining calm and focused, being able to break the task down into smaller understandable stages and using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. 3. Responsibility – understanding that my role was to enable the children to understand the mathematical concepts complete the task so enabling the children to aquire the knowledge required to repeat it.
Beth allai cael ei wneud yn wahanol? Pam?	What could have been done differently? Why?
1. Better planning – prior knowledge of task and the children’s developmental stage would have assisted my role of supporting the children more effectively. 2. Inclusion of a ‘warm up activity,’ a game of snakes and ladders, to prepare and engage the children for the task ahead. 3. Inclusion of enhanced and extension tasks as two of the children had a stronger subject knowledge and were able to complete the task quicker than the other six children in the group. 4. The other six children experienced difficulty with the task and would have benefited from additional resources to assist them with counting on and counting back. 5. Enabling the children to utilise the other areas within and surrounding the classroom, such as the sand and water area, the computer and white board in order to facilitate understanding and completion of the task when difficulty was experienced. This	1. Better planning – prior knowledge of task and the children’s developmental stage would have assisted my role of supporting the children more effectively. 2. Inclusion of a ‘warm up activity,’ a game of snakes and ladders, to prepare and engage the children for the task ahead. 3. Inclusion of enhanced and extension tasks as two of the children had a stronger subject knowledge and were able to complete the task quicker than the other six children in the group. 4. The other six children experienced difficulty with the task and would have benefited from additional resources to assist them with counting on and counting back. 5. Enabling the children to utilise the other areas within and surrounding the classroom, such as the sand and water area, the computer and white board in order to facilitate understanding and completion of the task when difficulty was experienced. This

would have created an active learning opportunity in line with the Mathematical Development, Foundation Phase pedagogy (Welsh Government, 2015).

6. At the beginning of the session a story about growing vegetables was read to the whole class. Instead of using a photocopied sheet to deliver the mathematics task the theme could have been developed further both in the classroom context and the outdoor classroom area to deliver the same learning objectives with better outcomes by creating a relevant mathematical learning experience (Stevens, 2008 and Tucker, 2010). This also would have provided a learning opportunity in line with the range of experiences and Foundation Phase pedagogy in the mathematical development area of learning provision of the Foundation Phase Curriculum (Welsh Government, 2015).
7. Inclusion of a plenary opportunity at the end of the session would have been beneficial as this would have enabled the children to review and reflect upon their learning (Tucker, 2010).
8. Opportunity for observations and feedback to be given to class teacher detailing how the children responded to and completed the task (Hayes et al, 2014).
9. Planning should not only include the learning objectives, but a clear indication of success criteria. By explicitly stating how the children will demonstrate that they have achieved the learning objective the supporting adults can be more reflective 'in action' and scaffold the learning opportunities more readily in order to engage each child in 'active' learning and differentiate the task more effectively.

Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/ Where?	When?e
1. Knowledge BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care	I wish to successfully gain my degree so that I can progress on to the UWTSD PGCE course.	By continuing to attend lectures, keeping up my current level of reading, research and study so enabling me to develop and extend my existing knowledge.	Interacting with peers, tutors, library services and student services at UWSTD.	July 2019
2. Knowledge PGCE Primary with Qualified Teacher Status	To enable me to become a qualified teacher so I can help children reach their individual academic potential by arousing their curiosity and stimulating	By attending the UWTSD PGCE Information Day on Saturday 23 June 2018 to find out more about the course and how to apply for it.	Over the summer break I shall start to consolidate the relevant information required for the successful completion of the application form on the	Early October 2018

	their desire to learn in creative, innovative and interesting ways. Providing an opportunity to develop my Welsh Language skills as part of the PGCE programme.		UCAS teacher training portal.	
3. Skills Delivery of theory learnt so far on BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care	Putting the theory that I have learnt into practice and being able to reflect and revise this.	By continuing to volunteer in the primary school placements that I have been offered the opportunity of.	Within my volunteering placements at Townhill Primary School, Penyrfro Primary School and Crwys Primary School Special Teaching Facility.	On-going
4. Skills Further develop active listening skills	Active listening skills are an integral part of effective communication skills. They help to build trusting relationships, obtain	Undertake personal research on how to achieve this and then put into practice asking a critical other to observe, if possible	Within my current employment and volunteering placements at Townhill Primary School, Penyrfro Primary School	On-going

	valuable information with which to work and also demonstrate a profound interest in understanding an others point of view.	video record, and then reflect on the information.	and Crwys Primary School Special Teaching Facility.	
5. Values Develop self-awareness of own personal values	So that I do not impose my values upon others. Recognising that everyone is entitled to their own values which may be influenced by their community or culture and it is vital that these are respected. Imposing my views upon others may make them feel judged and damage their self-worth resulting in them rejecting me and making it problematic for me to work	By developing a self-awareness of my own values. This will be gained by reflecting upon my behaviour, attitude and beliefs. Having studied ethics as part of the Research Module, I now have a greater understanding of ethical standards and operating within these guidelines so developing professional values reducing the opportunity of my personal	Everybody who I come into contact with on a personal and professional basis.	On-going

	alongside them. However, demonstrating acceptance and being respectful of the values of others can in the long-term result in the development of a strong working relationship where working alongside others is beneficial.	beliefs and values influencing my professional relationships and decision making.		
6. Values Being open to the beliefs and values of others and learning from them.	To provide myself with a new perspective so to reshape my own. Gaining an understanding of the different beliefs and values of others will add a new dynamic to my personal development and learning.	Simply observing their body language and behaviour, listening to and acknowledging what others say without judgment or bias and then momentarily reflecting upon this before responding or reacting.	Everybody who I come into contact with on a personal and professional basis.	On-going
7. Other?	I was rather apprehensive and doubted my abilities when I first started the	By continuing to volunteer in my placement schools and attending lectures.	Interacting with my peers, tutors, library staff and student services in order to	On-going

Reflective Practice: *a means of maintaining quality services for early years children*

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Introduction

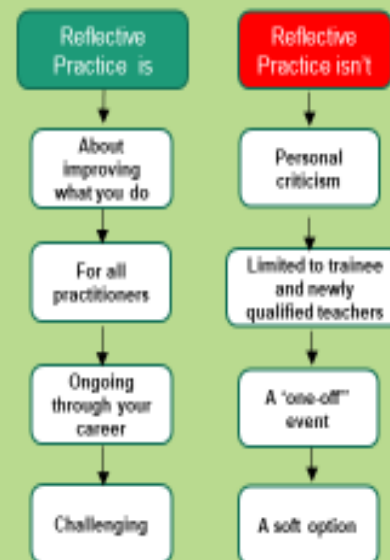
The concept of reflective practice originated from the works of Dewey (1933) and Schon (1983). Today there are multiple definitions of reflective practice and it is used, not only in the field of education but across multiple disciplines (Welsh Government, 2015). Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) declare that reflective practice is a pivotal requisite when working with young children.

The following information will provide an introduction to reflective practice, what it is, two of the models commonly used to support the process, why it is considered important and how ESTYN can support reflective practice.

What is Reflective Practice

Finlay (2008) proposes that reflective practice is the process of examining a concept, a situation or an event so that learning can take place. This occurs when an individual critically evaluates the experience so learning from their experience and gaining a new perspective upon which future practice may be improved. Reflective practice is not without its critics with Knight (2015) asserting that its loose definition leads to some viewing it with suspicion and cynicism, a process which is time consuming and a hinderance to routine practice.

Figure 1: What reflective practice is and is not (Grigg et al, in press)



The purpose of reflective practice is to bring about improvement and enable a positive response to change (Figure 1). Critical reflection is a vital element of reflective practice. It is derived by evaluating practice and making evidence based changes, being self-critical and questioning the notions underpinning personal beliefs and values whilst critiquing others work within a professional circumstances (Welsh Government, 2015).

Models of Reflective Practice

The multitude of reflective practice models in existence today provide a structure that enables practitioners to examine and learn from their experiences (Forrest, 2008). In 1983, Schon outlined how individuals who became aware of their implicit knowledge so learning from their experience. Schon's primary aim was not to describe the process of reflection but assist the development of reflective practitioners by identifying two types of reflection: **reflection-on-action** (analysis of thoughts and feelings after an event) and **reflection-in-action** (analysis of thoughts and feelings during an event) (Finlay, 2008).

Figure 2: Schon's Two Types of Reflection (Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team)



Finlay (2008) claims that use of both types of reflection aim to assist an individual in considering relevant theory whilst connecting with their feelings so constructing new understandings which can be used to develop future actions in a new situation (Finlay, 2008).

It is advantageous to use both types of reflection according to Forrest (2008) as it enables an individual to look forward as well as back. Schon (1983) also advocated that as an individual's expertise grew in developing the skill of being able to simultaneously monitor and adapt their practice they were in turn able to intuitively manage ever more complex and changing situations.

There are a number of critics of Schon's work. Eraut (2004) alleges that it is an imprecise, vague and non-critical tool of reflection. Jasper and Rolfe (2011) indicate that it fails to identify any biases that a person has and so doesn't allow an individual to challenge their attitudes, behaviours or understanding of themselves so preventing the a more critical view of their practice being developed. Moon (2005) is also sceptical so to whether reflection-in-action is achievable, declaring that an individual can only look back in context and time if there is sufficient distance from the situation or event.

Figure 3: Gibbs Reflective Cycle (Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team, no date)



Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) built upon Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Kings College London (2018) declare that it is an iterative, cyclical model as learning taking place through repetition with the action taking place in the final stage feeding back into the first stage so starting the process again. As can be seen from Fig.3 there are six headings which encourage the use to think about an experience systematically.

Finlay (2008) suggests that the basic sequential questions are beneficial as they offer a structure for the reflection process and unlike Schon, Gibbs's cycle is advantageous as it undertakes to include emotive responses and consider the reflective aspect of human nature.

However, Hayes et al. (2014) interpret this as a disadvantage as emotions and human nature are often viewed as being an imperceptible variable, difficult to measure or understand, so making them problematic to describe when using a simplistic, two-dimensional model. Another limitation in the view of Forrest (2008) is that Gibbs's model allows for retrospection only and as one of the identified purposes of reflection is to improve practice it is essential that individuals are able to look forward as well as back.

Why is Reflective Practice Important?

Reflective practice is important as it can improve work quality so benefiting learners and fellow professionals (Welsh Government, 2015). It enables us to:

- Understand the needs and abilities of learners
- Develop reflective learners by encouraging their use of reflection, analysis and evaluation to bring about a learning improvement (Scales, 2013).

Larivee (2008, 293) claims that 'unless teachers develop the practice of reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgements, interpretations, assumptions and expectations'. Where possible reflective practice should be carried out alongside others, that is colleagues, a mentor and other professionals, with regular input from learners, parents and theoretical sources. This provides the benefit of new information and a differing perspective upon which changes and improvements can be made (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011).

However, reflective practice is not without its weaknesses. Figure 4 shows the advantages and disadvantages of reflective practice (Welsh Government, 2015).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can improve the quality and standard of work	Lack of supporting evidence
Increases self-awareness	Can become bland and mechanical
Develops problem solving skills	Can be time consuming
Improves decision making and professional judgement	Can be emotionally draining
Gives practitioners personal control and ownership of learning	Not everyone is inclined to reflect

Having reviewed the research evidence, Finlay (2008) heeds that reflective practice should be sensitively taught, used selectively and with great care. Nonetheless, reflective practice is viewed as an effective means of professional development and is effective in bringing about institutional change.

ESTYN, is responsible for the inspection of quality and standards of all educational providers in Wales. The key aim of an inspection is to discover how good the standards achieved by learners are and how the quality of provision and management affect these. In this respect the observations, analysis and evaluations contained within inspection reports can be viewed as providing an independent means of reflection (ESTYN, 2004). The information contained within the inspection report can then be reflected upon by the educational providers practitioners so that strengths can be further developed and improvement brought about, with action plans made in any areas of identified weakness.

Inspection is not ESTYN's only role as they also highlight the sharing of best practice in case studies so providing guidance for practitioner to assist and develop their own practice. As outlined previously provision of new theoretical knowledge is an important factor when it comes to effective reflective practice.

Conclusions

To conclude reflective practice is utilised across many different professions today. In simplistic terms it may be construed as asking critical questions about an individuals actions with a view to learning from or developing them in the future. Whilst it is not without its criticisms it is seen as being pivotal to improving professional practice.

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