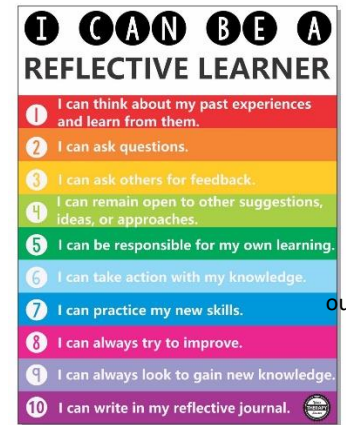


What is Reflection and reflective practice

Being able to reflect is a crucial ability for practitioners. Reflection is not a new skill you can trace it back right to Greek philosophers. Yet reflection has become a very modern demand in many professional fields. (Brock. 2015). Reflection does not always have to be taken place alone. It is a good idea and beneficial if you sometimes reflect within your team Schon (1983) believes to demonstrate reflective practice, practitioners are able to reflect on experiences engaging in the process of learning.. Reflective practice was something in which was developed in areas such as teaching, medicine and social work but has time as gone by many other areas has developed and embraced the principles of reflective learning. (Sewells 2017) suggests that being reflective in your learning does not come naturally to many practitioners.. As (Johns 2019) suggests reflective practice allows us to value our experiences, it is a human skill we actively merge into our everyday living. Schon (1991) believes there are two processes of reflection, reflection 'in' action and reflection 'on' action.



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Why is reflective practice important

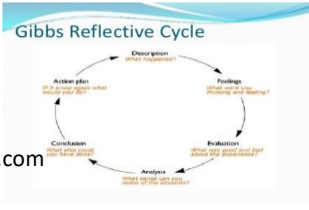
As a professional practitioner it is very important to have the skill to reflect on your own practice, this will make you look back on your planning, activities and learning and consider what went well and what did not by doing this you are taking charge of your own learning. By reflecting on our own practice, we can then continue to improve and develop our own professionalism. Reflective practice is a way of learning through and from your own experiences to gain new insights of self and practice (Finlay, 2008).through the use of efficient reflective practice, practitioners become more aware of their strengths and then able to develop in order to better their own practice. To better their own teaching, professionals must include reflection into their daily work. Reflective learning is something that should be used daily to improve your teaching. As well as reflective practice being useful for a practitioner's own practice and knowledge it is also good for the children in the setting to make sure they are gaining from the activities and lessons being planned for them. Meaningful reflection is necessary for effective reflection therefore it would need to be relevant to their work with children in early years as a professional. (Brock, 2014). According to Tarrant (2013) professional caregivers have a duty to provide every child with the best care and educational opportunities possible. Practitioners also need to use the reflective practice when observing children throughout the day, listening when children are engaging in their activities making sure to reflect on how the activities went and if the children were enjoying them. It also helps to understand the stage of the child's development and how to help them further and if extra support would be needed. After time reflection will become a natural way a natural ability in every practitioner's way of thinking.

Why is reflective practice important in an early years setting.

It is important for practitioners to be able to reflective together as it can promote a positive learning environment. It is also important to have time to reflect with colleagues as you may both have different activities that needs to be reflected on for the child's development. It also creates a safe and professional learning environment. The purpose of reflective practice in early years is to be able to provide better standard of experiences for both children and their families. (Hallet 2013). In professional practice It is key to have a good relationship with both children and families. A crucial part to your role as an early year's practitioner is to be able to involve and speak to a parent about their child's development. By good communication with parents, you are then allowing parents to be able to be reflective at home which will support the child's development In school. As Paige-Smith and Craft (2011) believes there is an importance for early years practitioners to be reflective as the early years sector environment is undergoing constant change especially about integrated working, which demands a reflective and considerate approach to developing new ways for multi-professional working.

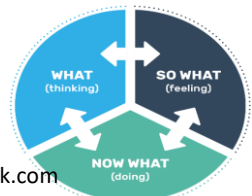
Theorists and models

There are many different reflective models that are used by professionals to help and support their own reflection time. All models are different, but they all include similar stages to help with self-reflection. The most used model of reflection is the Gibb's model which is called the Gibb's reflective cycle.



Gibbs reflective cycle is one of the most used by professional practitioners. In 1988 Graham Gibbs developed the Gibbs reflective cycle to give structure to learning from experiences. This reflective cycle is made up of six stages the description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and lastly action plan. Although this is quite a complex model it allows you to reflect in depth as a practitioner and evaluate exactly what was being reflected on and from this allows you to plan and learn from the outcomes. The university of Cumbria (2020) used the Gibb's reflective cycle and says that the extra stages makes it a useful model for Practitioner courses and that one of the key things about the Gibb's cycle is that it acknowledges the importance of feelings in reflection.

Another model used by practitioners is Kolb's model of reflection which is known as the experimental learning cycle. It is designed to help people learn from their experiences. The cycle was created by David Kolb in 1984. Kolb's cycle is smaller than Gibb's but is seen just as effective. There are two parts to Kolb's learning cycle. The first is that learning follows a four stage-cycle, and the second part focuses more on the learning styles or the process that occurred in order. Kolb (1984) believed that learners progressed through stages to complete the full cycle. Kolb's experimental cycle is made up of four stages. The four stages are Concrete experience, Reflective observation, Abstract conceptualization, Active experimentation. Once all four stages of the cycle are complete it allows the transformation of experience to knowledge occur. Kolb's theory is entirely based on the idea of converting experience to knowledge.



The last reflective model I have looked at is the Driscoll model. John Driscoll originally developed the 'what' cycle in 1994, 2004 and 2007. This model of reflection is the simpler model with only three stages. The stages being what? So what? And now what? Although this is the simpler model you answer the three questions and then start to analyse from that. The Driscoll model is the most straight forward and the easiest to remember. This was designed originally for healthcare practitioners but has been picked up by many other different kinds of learners.

Although all three models are effective in their own way there are pros and cons to using a reflective model in practice. Library guides (2019) says Some of the pros to using reflective models are that a reflective model offers you a structure to follow, it gives you a starting point if you are unsure where to begin and it can also allow you to access all levels of a situation. On the other hand, there are cons. The cons can imply that you must start your reflection in a certain way, when reflecting you may not always start from the beginning, and you may not be able to use a model in every situation. As mentioned briefly in what is reflection. Schon (1991) believes there are two stages of reflection in action and reflection on action. Schon distinguishes between both, reflection in action is when you reflect during the lesson, this can then still benefit the learners. this is where you can reflect while it can still benefit your learning whilst reflecting on action involves how practice can be developed after the lesson. Whilst Schon believes there are two stages of reflection Dewey (1910) wrote that reflective practice is an active, persistent and attentive investigation of any belief or knowledge in the light of the grounds to support it. Dewey says that being reflective enables us to know what we are about and when to act which is important in teaching.

How can reflective practice improve in the early years

Practitioners can gain a critical awareness of their own progress through reflective practice. It helps to develop the necessary skills needed to improve and achieve the best development. As a practitioner it will help to increase your confidence and make you become more proactive in the education you offer. It will also benefit children, parents and carers as they will be able to see the changes you are making in your practice and feel that you are providing a high standard of learning and constantly improving. Reflective practice can force you to stop and think about the learning and then act on it. By reflecting you are able to find new ways to encourage the children's development.

In conclusion reflection is a good key skill to have as a professional practitioner in early years. By reflecting you are ensuring you are giving each child the upmost care and that the correct learning is being provided whilst they are in your setting. You are also making sure that you are providing what the children likes, dislikes by reflecting on what went well and to identify their child's stage development to support that to the best of your ability. As well as reflective practice being an important part to support the children in your setting is also a good key to support your own practice. After researching all the different models, I have realised that I use the Schon reflection in action a lot. Going forward I am going to use reflective practice more with in my setting in more detail.

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