

What is reflective practice and reflection in early years as a professional practitioner

What is Reflective Practice and reflection

In the Early Years setting a reflective practitioner and having the chance to reflect have characteristic and abilities in their behaviour, instead of using your cognitive skill, it involves taking part and looking like part of how an Early Years Practitioner works, conceives and act. (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011). Reflective practice has cover accredit and aspect to indicate in practitioner' which involves communication with other members of staff, children, and parents. These embrace the ability to discuss, observe, evaluate find solutions; to receive feedback from work colleagues, be able to listen to other's views, gain knowledge from others, theories. To be able to think in a reflective way which will enhance your setting and work practice. REFLECT: (Gain knowledge, evaluate, reason, give feedback and receive feedback, explain). (Hallet, 2013 P. 28). Framework illustrates some of these Attributes and qualities.

- Reason
- Evaluate
- Feedback
- Learn
- Explain
- Consider
- Think

There is a lot of influence on professionals to reflect in and on their practice within their setting. Reflective practice and reflection are paramount to the professional and further training. Reflection is encouraged in different ways of disciplines, in Education and Social_Care. (Moon, 2004). Reflection is going back over what has happened the positive and negatives and evaluating the situation and gather questions to reflect and discuss what could be changed why, what, when and how. Could the lesson be delivered differently, resources changed and differentiate for the children's abilities. It becomes more purposeful and respond differently to the children. (McGregor and Cartwright 2011). Reflection when a person has experienced a situation in the life they start to think back on the situation and reflect, for example feelings. The person starts to think about what is going to happen next with moving forward. The Experience, Reflection, Action this cycle is known as the ERA cycle. (Jasper, 2013). There is also a 5R framework which will support with the learning. Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning and Reconstructing. (Reflecting on Experience, 2021).

Reflecting on The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child as a Professional Practitioner

The United Nation Convention of Right of the Child has 54 articles which cover a child's rights regarding social, political, civil, economic, and cultural rights that all children are entitled to in their life. Working together with the government and adults to make sure the child enjoys all their rights. Out of the 54 articles only 42 are for the child the remaining articles are for the adults and government to work together to ensure the child can access all their rights.

The United Nation Convention on the rights of the Child is important all the rights are same, there are not one that is more important than the other, they are linked. The right to definition of the child (Article 1), the right to social security (Article 26), the right to education (Article 28) and the right to respect for the views of the child (Article 12). "United Nation's Children's Fund is the only organization for children recognized by the Convention. UNICEF (No Date). In 2011 the Welsh Government took an extra step to support the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales). The Welsh Ministers when making decisions must think about the child's rights in all their conclusion. UNCRC (No Date)

The first information of post-devolution when making the policy for children in Wales was published in the year 2000 it was called Extending Entitlement (NAW, 2000a). The policy is set out to ensure the rights of a child is supported and chance is as far as possible and unconditional to the child. Over the past ten years the United Nation's Convention of rights of the child has supported the rights and treatment of the child to have a positive outlook by safeguarding children and young people. (Williams, 2013).

Professional Practitioner Observations and Planning

Observations is not work, it is a time to watch a child to gather information on their development and explore the wonder of the child. When doing an observation and knowing the purpose of the observation then the potential allows the observation to become complete with good facts of how the child is progressing.

The concern of the observation helps to develop the awareness of what to observe and to ensure that the correct information is being recorded. When planning activities for the child/children the observation is crucial to decide what resources are needed and the kind of activities are required to move the child forward in their learning. Observation is the first piece of information that is required to make key decisions about the child's learning and progression, they help the professional practitioner to understand the needs of the child and ensure an adult-child relationship. When the practitioner had that rapport with the child, the child feels safe and happy within the setting and their learning is enhance. Planning can be a heavy task, if the planning is lead by the child and the practitioner is malleable it is an easier task to complete. (Barber and Paul-Smith, 2010). Observing children helps practitioners find out the child's interests, physical ability and that engages the child, it also helps to understand their ability, social, personal skills, and emotional skills. A good observation warrants practitioners to analyse what the person has heard and seen and to access the activities so their make progress in their learning. When carrying out observations it then can be used in present planning and moving forward in the setting. When observing a child, you may notice that the child is repeating the activity repeatedly, for example moving objects from one place to another and back again, these repeating actions are called a Schemas. Some children ay have more that one schema and some children show none. When a child shows these repetitive actions, this supports the brain function. This also allows children to make a meaning of what they are trying to do. Children explore to find out why and how things happen supports their neural pathways, which makes matching with their learning and test their emergent thinking. (hwb.gov.wales 2022).

Performance Management in Early Years

Professional Practitioners are being asked in the early years sector to complete a Performance Management assessment on a yearly basis to develop their knowledge and learn new skills. Part of the task is to observe a child throughout the year to help the child move forward in their learning, an observation is done at the beginning to identify the child's area of needs. The practitioner works with that child weekly with planned activities to improve the child's ability on their need. Improving IT skills is a big part of the performance management, Microsoft teams was introduced and using Hwb during the pandemic. The final part of performance management is improving the use of Welsh in the setting, applying for courses picking words up from colleagues and using to children and members of staff around the setting. At the end of the year the performance management is signed off by a senior leader within the setting. There are three ways to plan a member of staff's performance management:

Objectives which the person is going to complete the tasks set.

Competencies, the confidence a person has towards their tasks.

Personal development - To ensure there are achieving their full potential and complete the tasks.

Debbie Garvey suggests that good performance management has a big impact of staff with learning new skills, understanding procedures and moving forward with achieving their goals as a professional practitioner and a bigger job satisfaction. Children only have one chance at their childhood, the staff in early years must be focused, reliable, and positive about their role to ensure the children show progression. Practitioners in the early years who achieve their performance management, training, observations, and appraisals are more likely to be good reflective practitioners and process in furthering their careers. (Garvey, 2017). The people who work in a school setting are the most important people to develop the children's learning and development. Continuing Professional Development which is meant by furthering your knowledge and training to enhance their careers. (Bubb and Earely, 2007).

Theories on Reflection

Graham Gibbs made a study called "Learn by Doing", the purpose of this is to encourage people to think systematically. Gibbs' 'reflective cycle' helps with the 'learn by doing'. Gibbs' cycle is in 5 stages which allows time to reflect on one area at a time. Gibbs suggested that when reflecting on a situation it allows to enhance the performance at the present time and moving forward. If reflection is not carried out, then learning in the future will not get better next time. Using the 'reflective cycle' you gain key areas from the situation, for example, what could be amended, positive and negative reactions. First step: all about the questions, telling of the learning, for example what happened, who was there. Second step: feelings how the practitioner felt. Third step: evaluation think of how the process went. Fourth step: analysis what went well, how could it be improved. And the final step: conclusion what else could have improved this process, using differentiation. The 'reflective cycle' allows the person to break the cycle down into 5 steps instead of the whole cycle as one. (Learning performance. 2019). Kolb's learning cycle is separated into 4 steps, when it is being used all four steps are looked at in depth. Step one: Concrete Experience, when a person has had an experience or is going through a new one. Step two: Reflective Observation of the new experience, when the person reflects on the situation with the knowledge of what they already know and understand. Step three: Abstract conceptualization, learning from the experience and new ideas come to mind. Step four: Active experimentation, the new concepts are applied to the experience to see if it makes a difference. (Simply Psychology, 2013). Schon indicated that reflection-on-action is not only gathering information and learning, but also the foundation of theory. Schon's (1991) has two stages of reflection. One: Reflection in action. Two: Reflection on action. This supports deciding on during and after the situation. In a teaching environment people need to change a situation as current it's not going to plan, when using Schon's practice it gives the element of reflective practice. (Schon 1991)

Work-based reflective pedagogy

The reflective pedagogy within a setting and knowledge to practitioners and professional learning is now being looked at. Reflective teaching and study pedagogy within the curriculum helps one of the areas to support students become reflective in their setting. The form of which the teaching and assessing helps the students to analyse the practice and look at the knowledge in the setting. (Hallet. 2013). Pedagogy is receptive, active, and planted in a good relationship, is the centre of this curriculum (Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings). It is important that the school supports the opportunities for these areas, Play and play based learning, being outdoors, authentic, and purposeful learning and physical literacy. (hwb.gov.wales, 2022). Pedagogy is a difficult issue for professional practitioners to have a understanding. Pedagogy is looked at in a holistic approach, which helps a better understanding of teaching. Gaining information about pedagogy gives professionals to evaluate the understanding with linking to setting and practice. (Waring and Evans 2015).

Conclusion

Concluding this briefing paper on reflection and reflective practice, as a child-care professional practitioner it's important to look at all areas to ensure that nothing is overlooked with children. Using the knowledge and gaining new information practitioners can improve their skills set and move forward. It's important to look at the theorists Learning cycle as it is beneficial to our learning. Being a professional practitioner is vital for the children in their care as getting the best out of the children and ensuring that the children are gaining the correct learning and that their Physical, Intellectual, language, Emotional and social skills are being met, (P.I.L.E.S). Working with children from nursery to year 6, reflection and reflective practice is a must as we are thriving to get the best out of the children and support them in every aspect of their school life.

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