



REFLECTIONS ON EARLY YEARS PRACTICE

EAAE5002



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Reflective log

Elfen 2 Log adfyfyriol – Element 2 Reflective log

Disgrifiad byr o'r gweithgaredd (dim mwy na 50 o eiriau Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words))	
Counting and sorting activity in school Nature Reserve. A group of 13 children will be told a story of how the fairies have played on the washing line, where the socks were drying, and they accidentally broke it and the socks blew away. The children in pairs, will then have to find them, finishing with the story of the caterpillar's socks.	
Nod/Amcan y gweithgaredd	Aim/Objective of the activity
The aim of the activity is to find, count and sort all the socks, correctly matching the socks according to size, colour and pattern. Fix the clothes line and hang the socks back up on the line using clothes pegs.	
Eich rôl chi	Your role
My role is to plan, prepare and lead this activity. It will be adult led, but I would like the children to lead and I will only intervene if necessary.	
Agweddau cadarnhaol – pam?	Positive aspects – why?
I prepared, planned and presented this activity taking careful consideration that I incorporated the needs and the relevant outcomes and skills of the children. As this activity was being undertaken outdoors in our nature reserve the children were already excited to be chosen to take part. This was heightened as the children listened to the story and were very eager to start the hunt. I felt I had pitched this activity to sound magical, fun but also challenging. I showed excitement and enjoyment, demonstrating respect and appreciation of being outdoors. This	

influenced the children's behaviour and the general relaxed mood which helped to put the children at ease and feel comfortable to immerse themselves in the activity. Another good aspect was that the weather was very favourable and this was a bonus to the activity. The children were not bored or disinterested during the activity as it stimulated them and being outdoors in a wooded area they were enjoying the natural environment and discovering wild life and nature as they hunted for the socks. Every time they found a matching pair they would scream with excitement and enthusiasm eager to find more socks. This activity in my opinion would have been restricted if indoors or in the classroom due to restricted use of space, controlled noise level and lack of diversity. The children were able to freely run using gross motor skills, use all their body at different positioning levels and to be aware to use spatial awareness as not to bump into anyone or anything.

I used incidental welsh and spoke to the children in Welsh, the children responded well to this, showing a good understanding of the welsh language. This reassured me that I was using the correct Welsh language patterns relevant to the children's age.

Agweddau heriol – pam?

Challenging aspects – why?

Although the children enjoyed this activity, I could see that there were challenges, initially taking thirteen year 1 children outside on my own seemed to be manageable. But in and on reflection there were too many children for one adult to successfully manage, due to the fact they had the freedom and space of the outside area. I felt could not always give my undivided attention when they needed me to answer and respond to their questions and interact with them due to the outside environment they were in as I had to watch and observe all the children to make sure they were safe and focused.

As I had over planned and the time frame I planned to do this activity was limited due to the commitments of the school timetable, it made me rush certain aspects of the activity and not spend enough time on other parts as I was on a limited timescale.

Having a mixed ability group also provided some challenges as I could see I needed to stretch some children to challenge them more, but still be inclusive of

those who were comfortable at this level of challenge in this activity hence another adult or more would have been beneficial in this instance.

I also feel I could have encouraged more use of the Welsh language, by using more incidental welsh and talk more in depth to the children in Welsh, therefore extending their welsh vocabulary. This would extend the children's vocabulary and help them to improve their response in Welsh and understand the use of the Welsh language in the right context.

Pa wybodaeth arddangoswyd?

What knowledge was demonstrated?

I demonstrated knowledge of knowing how to undertake an appropriate risk assessment, as I did a risk assessment prior to the activity and during the activity. I also explained and made the children aware to self-risk before participation and during the activity by alerting them to the dangers and hazards and getting them to answer questions and share their answers using group discussion.

I showed knowledge of the Foundation phase, (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, (2008) (DCELLS) including the seven areas of learning, to make sure that they are covered in this activity. I was focusing on the mathematical outcomes specifically in this activity but also the language, literacy and communication skills, Personal and social development, physical and welsh development.

My knowledge of child development and incorporating my observation skills to highlight any worries or concerns of the children I am working with, whether emotional, social, physical or intellectual, as a great deal can be detected from the power of observation.

Pa sgiliau arddangoswyd?

What skills were demonstrated?

The skills I demonstrated while undertaking this activity was using communication as I needed to be able to instruct and explain the activity and respond to their reactions.

Listening, as I needed to hear the children's voice, ideas and respond to their questions and reactions.

I used my organisation skills to plan the activity and carry it out effectively and used my leadership skills in the activity in a calm but enthusiastic and motivating manner. Using decision making, time management, self-motivation throughout the activity and when necessary resolving conflict.

I needed to demonstrate skills of adaptability, flexibility during the activity with the different variations and challenges that materialised working with the children. As there was a limited time frame and bearing in mind the number of children in the group, considering the main objective of the activity was finding and sorting socks, I displayed the ability to work under pressure.

Observation skills were an essential part of this activity as not only does it help keep the children safe but is used to assess the children and I used the method in-reflection to keep the children focused and engaged in their learning environment.

Demonstrating using my knowledge to incorporate in my thinking, Gibbs's reflective cycle model (1988) and Rolfs reflective framework (Rolf et al 2001).

Pa werthoedd arddangoswyd?

Which values were demonstrated?

Communicating and interacting with the children in a respectful, polite method.

I displayed empathy to the children if they showed any concerns and worries about any aspect of participating in this activity.

I remembered the children's interests and I respect their individuality and needs. I recognise their uniqueness and to be inclusive of their needs in respect to SEN and their own abilities and outcomes, showing differentiation, so they can progress when they are ready and in their own time.

Recognising the unique child valuing their contribution and listening, respecting the children, showing the children this is a right's respecting school and hearing their voice from a pupil's voice perspective. Encouraging the children to show and learn respect to the adults they are working with and guiding them to be respectful to the environment around them.

I value ethical procedures by asking the children's consent in partaking of this activity.

I am respecting my school's procedures and policies in informed consent by showing awareness of confidentiality and anonymity regarding data protection for example photographic evidence and sharing information.

By doing a risk assessment and instructing the children to self-risk I am safe guarding the children and keeping them from harm.

I recognise my own limitations and competence and a need to develop and learn further and incorporate this in my professional develop plan.

Beth allai cael ei wneud yn wahanol? Pam?

What could have been done differently? Why?

Although I planned this activity well, through reflection there is always room for improvement to enhance the activity to its full potential and on reflection there would be some changes I would make.

Another adult would have been ideal as I would have split the children into two groups. One group finding one sock and the next group finding the matching sock to the first group this I think would have kept their interest, but it would have been more manageable. The only dilemma in year 1 is there is only the teacher and the TA, so I would have had to borrow someone from another classroom so on reflection it would be difficult to do and very inconvenient to other members of staff. What I could have done was only take a small group out in the first instance as this would have no impact on any other members of staff.

I could have considered putting the children into ability groups as this is organised in classrooms. Although, I do find mixing abilities in different environments can be interesting to observe and can show some thought-provoking results. For instance, children react and display different behaviour and abilities in varying environments for example, a more able child in the classroom may find it difficult to conduct themselves in an outdoor environment as this could be out of their comfort zone, given they have more freedom than in a classroom. On the other hand, a child who is a little more academically challenged is quite adaptable and comfortable in the outdoors and shows leadership skills and initiative.

Reflecting on this activity I feel the children had fun and enjoyment and achieved a lot of the outcomes and knowledge by contributing in this activity. When children are

interested and engaged they are more likely to succeed and have a positive experience and outcome. It is also important for the professional practitioner to be organised and knowledgably but also to be able to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and learn from them thus making a good reflective practitioner.

I do feel by doing this reflecting log I have demonstrated a good understanding of reflection and it has been advantageous in analysing the activity.

Briefing paper

Reflection is an exercise of thinking, it helps a professional practitioner to make sense of what has happened, to question what has happened and to improve and act upon on what has happened (Reed and Canning 2010).

Reflective practice supports professional practitioners to acquire knowledge, understanding and learn from their own perceptions of themselves, others, their work and the environment around them (Bolton 2014). According to Bleach (2014) to achieve a high level of quality professionalism in Early years settings, reflection is an essential quality to develop and practice.

According to Hallet (2013) reflective practice is a comparatively new perception in Early Years settings but can help to progress the quality of teaching and learning if developed effectively. It is a continuing practice that enables the practitioner to change, adapt and progress the outcomes of children and themselves to establish a good practice environment (Rawlings 2018).

Sylva et al (2004) supports reflective thinking and suggests it enhances and promotes sustained shared thinking for example, where children and practitioners interrelate and share problem solving in activities, to aid them to cultivate their understanding and knowledge. According to Sylva et al (2004) by using this method it was observed that children made the most progress.

Schon (1983) pioneered two types of reflective practice: In -Action which is a process of thinking while doing for example “Thinking on one’s feet “and On-Action a thought process of thinking after the event and questioning what went well and what did not go so well and acting to improve and /or changing it for the future success of learning and teaching.

Schon (2010) points out the In-Action practice uses observational skills to ascertain if the practitioner is engaging the interest of the children and acting accordingly, to change the action while doing, to regain and re-engage the attention and interest of the children. The On-Action practice would be a long term thought process

to build on and help to improve the professional quality of teaching and learning thus this will aid to contribute to the professional practitioner's personal development plan (Learning wales 2016).

The central element of reflection according to, John Dewey, David Kolb, and Donald Schön highlights reflective thinking supports a significant factor of development and learning for children and adults. (Danelle et al 2009).

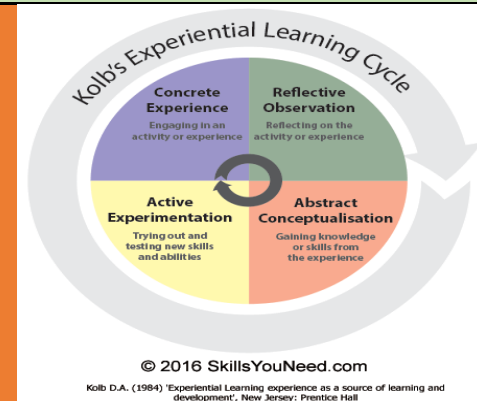
Gibbs' model of reflection (1988)



There are numerous models and frameworks of reflection to help guide practitioners, Gibbs reflective model is commonly used, especially in health care providers (Gibbs 1988).

(Source: Brainbox, no date)

Kolb's reflective cycle can be looked at as experiential model which means learning through experience, Gibbs's model is seen as learning through doing. (Bolton 2014). According to Dennison (2009), Kolb's reflective cycle is one of the most popular models used today.



(Source: Skills, 2016)

Area for further development (provide further details)	What?	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge	Outdoor practitioner course.	To contribute and support the school's enthusiasm about outdoor learning. To feel confident and knowledgeable to implement outdoor learning in a confident manner to children in the Foundation phase.	Currently working on but not yet completed an outdoor practitioner level 2 qualification.	Through a course advertised by UWTSD.	During the summer holidays.
2. Knowledge	Forest schools and other outdoor learning environments.	As this will further develop my knowledge and understanding and lead me to a higher qualification and be able to teach outdoor learning on a regular basis.	Finding out more about courses that could develop this. Sweden trip	Forest schools, Neath, Swansea and port Talbot. Sweden	After BA degree and hopefully get some support with the school I am working in. An opportunity to go in the 2 nd year of BA degree course.
3. Skills		To be able to engage with parents in showing the benefit of outdoor learning as it engages knowledge and understanding of the word. To invite parents to open sessions.	Develop regular open day sessions as to build up a relationship with the parents.	In the school I work in as we have a wonderful outside area and further areas to develop especially outside year 2 as suggested by me to the headmaster.	Long term plan and hopefully involve the whole school.
4. Values		To appreciate the natural environment and to make sense of what is around me. To be able to			

		show and help the children be empathetic to the natural environment.			
5. Other?	Develop IT skills Working with key stage 2 children.	Although, since starting my degree I have improved my IT skills enormously, but I still feel I want to progress further and gain confidence with IT. As I am trained up to the foundation phase and I am regularly working with Key stage 2 children as I don't feel as competent or as knowledgeable as I do with the foundation phase.	Ongoing, from my fellow students and co-worker and my husband. Also, to go on IT course. Gaining knowledge from co-workers and future courses.	IT course Ongoing within my degree. With fellow students and co-workers as we are share good practice. And my husband.	After my BA degree. Ongoing as a short and long-term plan.

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

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