

Element 2 Reflective log

Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words)
I bought my guitar in to play music and nursery rhymes with the children. We asked the children what songs that would like and sang it as a group together. The goal was to encourage children to learn through song. The age group was 3-4 year olds.
Aim/Objective of the activity
To engage the children to be motivated about music, also some children learn well through music and nursery rhymes. The goal was to encourage children to learn through song.
Your role
Was to lead the children in singing nursery rhymes and songs, keeping them engaged and interested in music.
Positive aspects – why?
The children that took part in the activity were very excited and happy. They were full of ideas for the next song and couldn't wait to show their knowledge of them. They were not shy about singing along. They were also interested in the guitar, asking lots of questions on how I play it. This is a great way to encourage children to learn an instrument and letting them know that it's something they can do if they would like. I was also surprised to see how many of the children did not need the words, they knew the songs and nursery rhymes of by heart. Some children even did the actions or danced to the music, showing no fear of what others may think around them.
Challenging aspects – why?
In the beginning of this activity the children were given a choice if they would like to free-play or to join in with the music, I felt that because of this it was hard to engage the children at first. They were distracted by the other children playing around them. I also felt like I could have planned the activity better, for example I only had a few set songs which meant I didn't have the words or chords for the others. I had to google these on a computer, and this took time, making some the children rowdy as they were over excited by all the singing and music. During the activity some of the children that had decided to play wanted to join in the activity, requesting songs or nursery rhymes that we had already done. This displeased the original children as they were already excited for the next song. Overall, I feel that I could have planned the activity much better. I think that I should of set rules that once you picked play or singing you had to stick with it, this would have made it feel less chaotic, I also would have made more options for the children so that I didn't have to spend the time googling lyrics and chords. It's not fair to have to ask children to wait around for a long period of time. I feel this would have made the children listen more and feel more engaged in the activity.
What knowledge and skills were demonstrated?
The main knowledge that was demonstrated was the knowledge of music through several ways. The first way was through playing the guitar in front of the children, usually they would learn a song through listening to it being played through a CD player. Seeing it demonstrated can help them get a feel for the music and how it is played. Then the use of hearing words and lyrics used in the correct way, this is a great way to help with their reading, writing and speaking. For some of the songs the children read the lyrics off paper, encouraging their reading skills. Lastly most the children sang from memory which is a great for their cognitive development!

Which values were demonstrated?

To do a task like this I feel that one of the most important values to demonstrate is patience, so the children can feel comfortable with the songs and not feel pressured to sing. I feel like I showed this through letting the children chose what songs and nursery rhymes they would like to sing, even if sometimes twice. Also not pressuring them to sing loudly or at all, some children prefer to listen, and I allowed them to do this. Kindness by encouraging the children with how well they are singing and remembering/reading the words. Looking back on the activity I wish I had encouraged them a lot more as it's so important for them to feel like what they are doing is good, especially when it comes to reading and listening.

What could have been done differently? Why?

I feel like the lesson could have been organised better, for example we could have made a list of songs that we would sing and have all the words ready instead of just some. I feel like this would have helped the children to concentrate better on the task. It also could have been a good opportunity to teach the children a new song. A lot of the time in nursery they repeat the same songs every day, introducing a new one will encourage them to remember new words and help them to feel more comfortable around new things. I would have made sure to encourage the children in all areas regularly during the activity. I would have made a rule that if you chose to play instead of sing that you had to stick to it, I feel an activity like this requires organisation so that the children involved can get the most out of it. It was not the children's fault that in some places they were restless this really made me try to see how I could improve this for the next time, I feel like this would be by having a direct plan with the music and not having pauses in between songs for too long. Not dwelling on the same nursery rhyme for too long, as it's important to make sure all the children are listening to something they like. The main issue with this activity was the lack of organisation, even though I feel like the activity was a success I know that these factors will improve it even more for next time!

Reflection is a personal experience where you learn from a situation or event that took place, you look back on what happened and considered the good the bad and how you could change it for the better. (Colorado Mountain College,2007).

So how does this fit into early year environments? Smith et al (2008) say: *“Reflective practice is a vital aspect of working with young children and enables a deeper understanding of their learning and development”*. So, reflecting on our practice can help us to ensure that children are learning in the best possible way for them.

Skills and Knowledge gained from critical reflection:

- We learn how best children learn as individuals.
- To put children's needs first.
- We learn how to form a proper relationship with the children.
- To reflect on our teaching through assessments.
- To interact in play rather than interfere and to observe and learn from they way children play. (Houghton, 2017)

Important Values to consider in critical reflection:

The Trade Union of Education (2019) state that *“Good professional ethics are among a teacher's most important resources”* Ethics can also be considered as “morals” the basis on which a person acts. Some important values for a teacher are as follows:

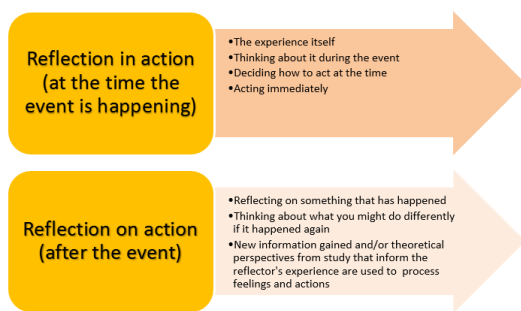
- Honestly, honestly with yourself and others is the best way to communicate with people
- Dignity, having respect for humans not matter their differences, faiths or beliefs
- Fairness, treating people equally and having no favouritism. (TKFSG,2018)

What is Professional Practice within an Early Years setting?

We learn through the Welsh induction framework the importance of professional practice, it is said that it should be the foundation of our knowledge as Practitioners. We can achieve this through certain methods such as our:

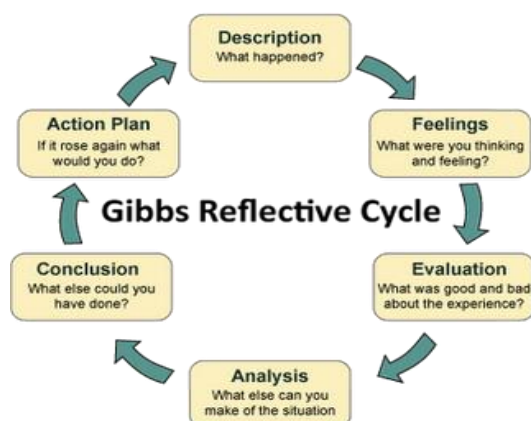
- Knowledge of child development
- Learning through play
- The child's well-being
- Correct environments for learning and for physical activity.
- Ensuring they have a healthy diet
- Routines that have been well thought out for the children's benefit
- A sound knowledge of family dynamics (SCW,2016)

All of this while making sure we view children as capable so that we can give them a positive learning experience. (CCFW, 2016)



Schön is a good reflective model to use because it shows the differences between the two types of reflection and, encourages confidence in what you do. However, one thing to consider is that even though it shows the two different types of reflection it does not give a lot of detail on how to do them. (Schön,1983)

(Wordpress, 2015)



Gibbs model makes you consider the stages of reflection while still being simple. It is an effective method for reflecting on an event as it makes you see the steps that you take. (Gibbs, 1998). However, some people say that it is superficial reflection as it has no referral to critical thinking, analysis, assumptions or viewing it from another perspective (Atkins & Murphy,1993)

(Wordpress, 2015)

How does this link to the Government?

To keep these elements in place we have Government organisations like Care inspectorate Wales to ensure and enable guidelines for us to follow. They implement Assessments in schools so that as practitioners we can better reflect on our practice, writing reports of activities is a great way to reflect. They ensure that the needs of children are being met in all aspects, they call this the 'quality of care' a lot of these aspects we mentioned earlier in the 'Values' section. They ensure: Nurture and well-being, behaviour, healthcare, medication and food and drink. (CIW, 2016)

Esyn is another Government organisation that carries out inspections in schools and Nurseries to ensure professional practice is being used. (Estyn,2018) They look for practitioners are using their settings to provide all that the children need. They look at things such as how the practitioners are observing children play as we can learn a lot from observation, it's part of reflection after all. Are we taking the children outdoors and letting them play and explore in nature? Once again having inspections enable us to reflect on what we are doing and how we can better it for the next time. It shows that is important to be able to reflect on our own but also from feedback from others. (Estyn,2011)

Early Years Wales, formally known as PPA. (PPA,2018) has had a new framework in place since October 2018 which helps to support workers in the induction stage, this helps them to understand the importance of frameworks, knowledge, skills and values that is needed in the job, helping them to reflect on what they are learning immediately. As our values, knowledge and skills are all part of good practice and critical reflection. (CIPD, N.D)

References: Welsh Government. (2016) National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for Children up to the age of 12 years.

Care Council for Wales. (2016) Continuing Professional Development Principles for the early years and childcare workforce in Wales.

Estyn. (2011) Happy teachers, happy pupils. The Welsh Government.

Personal development plan

Knowledge: I need to gain a TEFL certification.	Why? So that I can teach abroad in Europe.	How? I can get one of these by going to their website: www.tefl.org.uk it costs £199. If you are student you can get up to 35% off.	Who/Where/when? On their website www.tefl.org.uk , I can do the entire course online if I wanted too and start whenever I wanted. This is something I'd likely do in the summer as it takes 50 hours to complete.
Knowledge: First Aid & Food hygiene.	Why? This will be very useful to have in a school environment. And also will help with employment.	How? After some research I decided to ask my placement about it, they have agreed to put me on the courses through them.	Who/Where/When? These will be taking place in Pembrokeshire college, I will start in May and spend my Saturday's studying there.
Skills: Motivation	Why? I find that I leave things to the last minute because that is when I get the motivation to do it.	How? By setting myself realistic goals of completing task by certain dates.	Who/Where/When? I will use a wall planner to map out dates and schedules so I will constantly aware of what I need to do and when. This can be started immediately.
Skills: Tidiness	Why? Mess makes me feel very stressed and I find that I cannot work properly when things around me are messy or cluttered. Unfortunately, I don't find a lot of time to clean.	How? I need to start spending time making sure that I have a clean environment, so my level of work and motivation is improved.	Who/where/when? I could either find another place to do my work, like travelling in to the library as I find I get a lot of good work done there. This can be effective immediately.
Values: Patience	Why? Patience is highly important when working in a school environment. It is important to wait and let the children learn things for themselves rather than doing it for them straight away.	How? By allowing the children to keep trying things until the understand. Wait for them to ask for help. Allowing children to talk and ask questions.	Who/where/when? I can practice this in placement, I already feel like it's something I am learning the more time I spend there. I am starting to understand how the children learn best and this take patience.

Values: Self-awareness	Why? I strive to be the best possible person that I can be, so sometimes I am very hard on myself when it comes to situations and things that go wrong. Especially when I think I can do better. This is all part of reflection.	How? I need to focus more on the task and what will benefit the children or my work. Then naturally I should improve. It is good to have a strong feel for your morals, but it should be controlled.	Who/where/when? Focus on reflection using models or cycles of reflection so that I may concentrate on the important things. I can do this anywhere at home or at work or in university. Learning as I go!
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