

Briefing paper 1012 words

The practice of reviewing past experiences, actions, or situations in order to understand what occurred is known as reflection. Why might that have occurred? and how it might be enhanced going forward. People can learn from their experiences through reflection, which includes critical thinking and self-awareness. The intentional and systematic use of consideration in a work setting is known as reflective practice. It assists professionals in assessing their methods, adjusting to the various requirements of children, and participating in ongoing professional growth. This means that in order to make sure they are successfully serving the requirements of every child, early childhood educators must constantly reflect on their interactions with children, their teaching methods, and their understanding of the surrounding environment. (Carlson, 2023)

In the initial stages, reflective practice is essential for several reasons. Reflective practitioners can identify what works well and what requires enhancement, ultimately leading to improved learning results and experiences for children. Children benefit when practitioners adjust their interactions and experiences to suit each child's needs, fostering development in a more effective and meaningful way. This ensures that children are the focus of all planning and decision-making processes (Boodoo, 2024)

Reflective practice fosters a mindset of lifelong learning , practitioners become more open to feedback , willing to adapt and motivated to grow their knowledge, encouraging continuous professional development.

By reflecting on incidents or safeguarding issues, practitioners can learn from their mistakes, prevent future risks that exist and keep children safer. This is another reason why reflective practice is crucial in the early years. In order to make sure they are providing the best environment possible for young children to flourish, reflective practice enables practitioners to be deliberate, sensitive, and mindful in everything they do. (General Medical Council, 2018)

Examining theories of reflection, educational and psychological frameworks underlie reflective practice. Donald Schon significantly contributed to this. Schon presented the concepts of "reflection on action," which involves immediate thinking, reflecting in the moment, assessing the situation, and reacting instinctively, and "reflection in action," which pertains to post event contemplation, reviewing what transpired, evaluating the circumstances, and considering necessary changes for improved future outcomes. He highlighted the importance of professional intuition and learning through experience. In his view, reflective practitioners are always seeking improvement and striving to find enhanced solutions. John Dewey contributes further to the philosophy of reflection (Crosby, 2005)

Dewey defined reflection as the intentional, ongoing, and careful assessment of one's beliefs and behaviours in light of pertinent information. He thought that reflection was the secret of learning. (Rodgers, 2002)

It is common practice to use Gibbs' reflecting cycle when interacting with individuals. There are six crucial phases in the Gibbs model, these include one. description, taking into account what happened two. feelings, taking into account the sensations and thoughts felt. Three. Evaluation of the experience's advantages and disadvantages four. Analysis of the knowledge gained from this circumstance five. a list of potential alternate courses of action six. plan, specify what actions should be taken in the event that this experience recurs. This is a great learning process since it is well-structured and uncomplicated, encouraging both emotional and critical reflection, which makes it perfect for beginners. (Katie, 2023)

David Kolb is widely recognized as an educational theorist, The first phase in the Kolb experimental learning cycle is concrete experience, which is achieved by doing or having an experience you wish to reflect on. phase two is reflective observation, which involves reviewing and considering the event. three. abstract conceptualisation, drawing conclusions, and experience-based learning four. Planning and putting what has been learnt into practice through active experimentation. (Kurt, 2020) This idea promotes applying what has been learnt to

future experiences and places a strong emphasis on learning by doing. This cycle complements play-based learning as well. The main difference between Gibbs and Kolb is that Kolb avoids discussing emotions. Kolb's emotional insights are lower than those of other models of reflection. (Cherry, 2025)

There are three simple steps in the Driscoll reflection cycle. You first think what is the main crucial question? You are then prompted to describe the experience in detail. Observing and understanding the situation without passing judgement is the major goal of this phase. Thinking about what happened and what were the key events? Analysing the experience, weighing its significance, and determining what you've learnt from it are the next steps. This stage involves thinking back on your feelings and responses. The focus of this final inquiry is now highlighted in the third step which is, how can you apply this information to future actions? This stage is all about planning and improving, and setting goals based on your self-reflection. (Nursing Answers, 2024)

The Gibbs and Driscoll reflection cycles differ primarily in their focus and tier structure. The Gibbs cycle's six phases provide a more comprehensive framework for self-reflection encouraging a closer look at feelings and evaluations. Because Driscoll's reflection cycle consists of three main questions that focus on the event, its significance, and next steps, it is more concise and uncomplicated. (McLoed, 2025)

The choice between the Gibbs and Driscoll cycles may rely on the desired amount of thought, but both are helpful tools for reflective practice. While the Gibbs cycle is more comprehensive and examines emotions and assessments, (The University of Edinburgh, 2024) the Driscoll cycle is more straightforward and focusses on the immediate application of learning.

Overall A key element of professional practice in the early years is reflection, which includes a critical examination of the interactions between educators and carers, educational strategies, and the classroom setting. It is essential for pinpointing areas that need improvement and successful tactics, which raises the standard of early childhood education (Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper, 2001). The production of inclusive, responsive, and developmentally appropriate experiences that foster young

children's holistic growth is facilitated by reflective practice (Dalli et al, 2012). Additionally, it supports ongoing professional development, which empowers practitioners to make well-informed choices, adjust to the various needs of students, and match their methods with the most recent research and policy recommendations (Department for Education, 2024).