

Element 2- Reflective Log

Brief description of the activity (no more than 50 words)- Aimed at a Year 1 class in groups of 6, children to use play dough to create caterpillars which they can then describe using the correct mathematical vocabulary and measure using non- standard measures.
Aim/Objective of the activity- <u>Foundation Phase Framework, (Welsh Government, 2015).</u> • Use non-standard units to measure. • Use mathematical language to discuss their own ideas and choices. • Compare and order numbers to at least 20. • Transfer mathematical skills to play and classroom activities. <u>National Numeracy and Literacy Framework, (Welsh Government, 2008).</u> • 1.M1 Use non- standard units to measure • 1.M1 Count reliably up to 20 objects • 1.OS2 Talk about things they have made or done, explaining the process • 1.OC1 Contribute to conversations and respond to others, taking turns when prompted
Your role- • To lead and facilitate the activity whilst encouraging children to stay on task. • Question the children to check their understanding and ask how they know this. • Continuously challenge the children to the best of their ability. • Modify the activity if a child is finding it difficult.

- Give praise and rewards to promote positive behaviour.

Positive aspects – why? -

The activity was fun, well planned and I had provided the children with a wide range of resources that they enjoyed using. The children were fully engaged and the majority stayed on task. The activity was carried out in the 'Creative area' and I did this to ensure that the resources were accessible. I encouraged the children to work independently using their own ideas because I think it is important for children to use their own initiative without always being told what to do and what to use. I thought this went well because the children showed excitement of being able to use their imagination whilst still completing a maths based activity. I believe that most of the children listened well and they followed instructions first time. We read and looked at pictures from the book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and I encouraged them to describe the caterpillar using Mathematical vocabulary. This was to demonstrate their level of understanding of length and width. I think that this is good practice because it shows that Mathematical skills and language can be incorporated into other learning opportunities. Once the children had created their caterpillar using the play-dough provided, I questioned them about the size and shape of their model and they independently used mathematical vocabulary to describe and compare it. This highlighted that the children developed a good understanding after what I had discussed and demonstrated with them previously. I challenged some of the children to measure their caterpillars using unifix cubes and to compare them. This was a very useful tool to help the children with their measuring and it demonstrated their different abilities. Some of the children began to question others about their caterpillars. This highlighted that the children showed a positive attitude and a great willing to learn. One little girl within the class is very shy and it takes a lot of encouragement for her to participate in group activities as she prefers to work alone, however, she seemed very comfortable engaging with the group and was also asking and answering questions. After the activity, some children chose to repeat it during their own time by creating different models to describe and measure. I was very impressed and pleased that the children had chosen to develop their learning further during their free choice activities.

Challenging aspects – why? -

Throughout the activity I found it difficult to do everything myself. I was supporting the children but I also had to organise lots of resources to ensure that the children had everything they needed. If there wasn't enough of something, I had to get it so it was difficult to supervise the

children at times and I started to feel unprepared. This then resulted in myself feeling under pressure and I began to lose patience which I am disappointed about. I tried to promote positive behaviour as much as possible but as I started to lose my patience, looking back, I now feel that I was a bit too negative. Some children were disruptive and rather than staying positive I started to become negative and this made their behaviour worse. Also, not all children understood the activity so I had to explain it multiple times. I could not have been very clear and I found it difficult to then change my practice to make it easier for the children to understand. Children either learn visually, auditory or kinaesthetically- sometimes a mixture, so I should have been able to meet the children's preferred learning styles (VARK, 2019). Because I work in lots of classes with lots of children, I realised that I should have gathered more information about the children's abilities. Sometimes the children found the challenges too easy and others were not challenged enough. The children who were not challenged became agitated and disruptive which had an impact on the group.

What knowledge was demonstrated? -

I showed good knowledge of the Foundation Phase Framework and the outcomes that the children should be working towards and I planned my lesson around this. I chose this lesson because it fell in line with the children's topic and it was based around their interests.

What skills were demonstrated? -

The lesson was creative, and I tried to create a different way for the children to learn. I communicated with the children throughout the activity and encouraged them to communicate with each other. I asked lots of questions to check their knowledge and understanding and listened to their responses when they questioned one another. There was an element of adaptability in my activity as I tried my best to challenge the children if I felt they needed it.

Which values were demonstrated? -

I put a lot of hard work into the planning of my activity and I was dedicated in the hope that the children would not only learn from it but enjoy it as well. I persevered and encouraged the children when they found it difficult, supporting them in the best way I could in order to better their

understanding. I was an active listener and listened to what the children said, not just about the activity, but also when they expressed their thoughts and feelings. I felt a sense of compassion when the little girl who is shy joined in with the group.

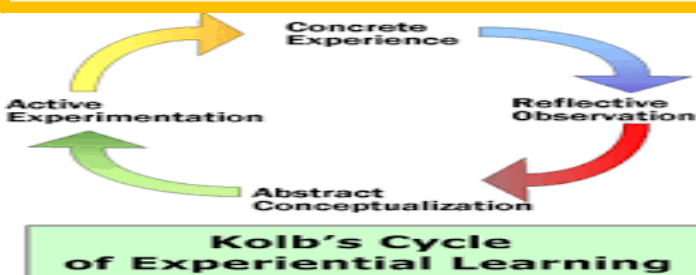
What could have been done differently? Why?

Next time I would;

- Ask another member of staff for help when preparing and replenishing resources.
- Make sure that I stay calm throughout, taking extra care not to lose patience.
- Always remain positive and deal with disruptive behaviour using positive strategies.
- Ensure I am giving clear instructions and meeting the learning styles of all children.
- Take care when using complicated vocabulary
- Ensure that I have good knowledge of the children's abilities when planning.

What is reflective practice? (Paige-Smith and Craft, 2011, p.3) describe this as a vital element to consider when working with children. Early Years practitioners are progressively expected to think carefully about their practice and the different learning experiences that they have encountered to improve their professional development. This then supports them in providing the best care possible for children. Reflective practice has become a fundamental expectation of all practitioners who contribute to a child's learning and development. (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, 2016) explain that reflective practice is the method of thinking about and analysing your practice with the intention of developing, adapting and improving

What model of reflection can I use for reflective practice? (Alvi, 2015) recognises that a model of reflection is a methodical process which guides the act of serious thought and consideration into practice. There is no right or wrong model to use, however, it must provide practitioners with the opportunity to develop and learn from previous experiences.



How can I become a reflective practitioner? (Moss and Petrie, 2002) have encouraged practitioners to consider how they work with children, but also to focus on how the concept of childhood is considered and how the many voices of young children are responded to within early years settings. The authors go on to highlight that reflective practice motivates current change and this is generated from the reinterpretation of one's own practice and learning experiences. (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, 2016) advise that to become a reflective practitioner, the ability to view practice with a balanced view and to acknowledge the strengths and areas that need improvement are essential. Over time, evaluating practice will help to develop confidence. (Kolb, 1984) states that when a practitioner is allowing themselves to continuously develop through reflection, this becomes a continuing process established from the experience of one's own practice.

Reflective Practice

David Kolb Reflective Cycle—This model emerged from experiential learning. (Kolb and Fry, 1975) aim for two main constructs, reflection and continued development to produce the most excellent practice in a child practitioners' improvement. (Kolb, 1984) hypothesized that people naturally learn in two opposite ways; the thinking and feeling, and the watching and doing. Kolb presents his learning cycle through a series of stages' concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. This is the process of making observations that will support you in reflecting on your experience. Whilst reflecting, this enables you to conclude and recognise new implications to put into practice. Putting all these steps into action will then lead practitioners to the next experience and the cycle begins again.

(Source: Karin Kirk, 2007).

(Source: University of Kent, 2012)

Graham Gibbs Reflective Cycle—(Gibbs, 1998) suggests that reflection happens after a learning experience. The experience then provides guidance through the process of reflecting. The structure consists of key questions that are based on key events which provide a checklist for practitioners to develop and progress. This model targets learning from experiences by considering feelings and thoughts to take further action. The reflective model is made up of six stages with each step providing the information needed to go onto the next- the description, feelings, analysis, conclusion and action plan. Each stage is provided with questions that encourage a debrief of the learning experience which provide structure to improve learning outcomes.



What is excellent practice? Effective practice ensures the guarantee of children receiving the best possible outcomes from their learning experiences within the Foundation Phase (Early Years Matters, 2019). (Department for Education, 2017) state that an Early Years setting must demonstrate and maintain good, quality practice in connection to curriculum planning, evaluation, monitoring, transitions and communication with parents and other care providers. Identifying good practice places the child in the centre, focusing on their wellbeing and development. This means that practitioners must have a clear vision of achievement for each child in their care. It is important that professionals working with children are qualified and knowledgeable in order to have the ability to help each child reach their full potential. This highlights the importance of reflection to enhance constant improvement throughout the Early Years environment.

Improving Practice

How does reflection link to excellent practice?

(Welsh Government, 2015) explain that children progress through the good practice of planning, developing and reflection. When this is done excellently, children achieve a profound understanding which allows them to investigate and explore the world around them. This is highlighted in the Foundation Phase Framework. (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, 2016) clarifies that when practitioners take time to reflect on their practice, this links to improvements throughout the school environment which enhances efficiency allowing evidence of outcomes to become clearer for inspections. (Welsh Government, 2016) points out that reflection is a vital aspect of improving the Foundation Phase and how it is delivered. It helps to support the improvement of inconsistencies linked to practice and supports practitioners in understanding when and why there is need for improvement. When the quality of practice is improved, so is the quality of outcomes for children.

Estyn- (Estyn, 2017) have a vital role of inspecting the quality and guidelines in Education throughout Wales. Estyn state that for a Foundation Phase to demonstrate excellent practice, the setting must provide a suitable balance of consistent improvement and focused provision. Continuous provision throughout the setting must act as the starting point for activities to be planned around. Estyn evaluate and grade Early Years settings as they look for a combination of requirements including the quality of teaching and learning, personal development and the different outcomes set for children. All settings should have a current and up to date self-evaluation plan put together and this is built up from reflections of different practice and learning experiences. This is one of the many documents that Estyn use to determine the extent of what the school does well and how it needs to improve.

Care Inspectorate Wales- (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2017-2020) is an independent manager of social and childcare in Wales that implements action on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The service is in charge of making sure that childcare settings are providing safe care as well as ensuring that children's lives are being respected to enhance their quality of life. The CIW inspect care providers in order to achieve improvements of services and investigate any concerns that are produced. (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2019) explain that when a setting is inspected, they need to show very powerful and sustained evidence of practice in order for the practice to be seen as excellent. The impact on children's wellbeing and achievement must be highly sufficient and inspectors will cautiously consider how consistent practice is throughout the setting.



(Source: CanStock Photo, 2019)

Element 4- Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Maths GCSE	I need to achieve a GCSE grade A-B in Maths to be accepted onto a Graduate Teaching Programme. At the moment I have a grade C.	I will need to attend a part-time evening course in college. This would have to be in the evening as I do not want my job hours to be affected.	The most convenient college would be the City of Newport Campus which is a part time evening course very close to where I live. This will allow me to attend college around the hours that I already work.	(Coleg Gwent, 2019) was a useful website for information which showed that there is a WJEC GCSE Mathematics course beginning on 4 th September 2019. This is every Wednesday evening from 17:00 until 19:00. The cost of the course is £375.
2. Knowledge Graduate Teaching Programme (GTP)	(UCAS, 2019) explain that this is an employment- based programme in Wales that offers a route to qualify as a teacher while you are working. GTP trainees are employers of the school and hold a contract as an unqualified teacher. The pay scale starts at approximately £15, 817. I have chosen this route into teaching as it would allow myself to continue working and earn money as I have	I am currently employed in a primary school as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant. My Manager is very helpful and we have already discussed the GTP for many years so I am fully confident that I have her full support. The school would then have to make an application to The Initial Teaching Education Provider (ITEP) for GTP training places. (Welsh	This programme is employment- based which will allow myself to continue working in the school that I am currently employed at. I will need to follow an approved training programme designed to meet the specified standards to achieve my Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).	Once I have achieved the qualifications needed to begin the GTP, I will look into applying in 2021.

	responsibilities and bills to pay.	Government, 2019) explains that the ITEP are responsible for addressing queries about the criteria of the applicant, including their degree and other qualifications.		
3. Skills Paediatric First Aid Certificate	This requires an update every 3 years and at the moment mine has run out. (Coleg Gwent, 2019) informs that this course is targeted at practitioners throughout the Foundation Phase as it is important that safe and effective practice is maintained when treating injuries and ill health.	I will need to attend a full day course at college. This will be approved by my manager as it is to improve my practice and skills.	I would ideally prefer to attend a college that is close to where I live, however, if this is not possible, I am committed to travelling to wherever necessary.	I have enquired on the Coleg Gwent website about future First Aid courses that are arising as there were none showing at present. I will enrol as soon as they send all of the information needed.
4. Skills Promoting Outdoor Learning	There is a lot of pedagogy behind the outdoor learning area and I am very interested in developing my skills to be able to enhance this area for the children to make full opportunity of.	The Education Achievement Service (EAS), has an online continuing professional development (CPD) service with lots of courses to choose from that help to progress your skills. This course would be approved by my manager as it is to improve my practice within the school setting.	The online CPD service shows that there is a course taking place in a local Primary School.	The course is split into 2 sessions, the first session begins on Thursday 3 rd October 2019 and the second is Thursday 19 th March 2020. The course is free of charge.

5. Values Patience	Because I am employed as a HLTA, I am always working with lots of children from different classes. These children all have different abilities and backgrounds with a range of different personalities. This makes it very important to have lots of patience. It can be very easy to get frustrated with a child who does not understand something or if they are displaying signs of disruptive behaviour.	I need to consider how I am explaining things to children, making sure that I am clear so that they show a good understanding. I should consider the wording and vocabulary I use when working with children to ensure that I am not over complicating something. I also need to make sure that I am encouraging positive behaviour throughout the classroom rather than shouting at the children who are being disruptive.	This needs to develop throughout my time in school, not just within the classroom. It is important to develop good relationships with all children.	This can be addressed immediately, and I can start to develop my practice further straight away.
6. Values Fairness	It is important that children understand what is right and wrong and it is up to practitioners to support them in teaching this. Children need to all be treated the same regardless of circumstances such as their ability, background, and behaviour. It can sometimes be easy for	I can do this by ensuring that my practice is fair to all children so that they do not lose self-confidence and show willing to learn.	I can develop this throughout the school day, inside the classroom as well as around the school. This will again also help me to develop good relationships with all children.	I can start developing my practice immediately and can reflect on situations later to ensure that my practice is improving.

	teachers to have 'favourites', however all children need to be disciplined and treated in the same way. When children are treated fairly, they reward adults by showing them respect.			
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