

Reflective Practice

in the early years

What is reflection?

As a practitioner in the early years you will want to provide the best care and practice possible for the children in your setting. By reflecting on your practice maintains and improves the quality of practice. Reflection supports you in challenging, changing, modifying, developing and improving practice (Pacey 2016). Reflective practice is thinking about and analysing your practice. (Skills you need) Ideally this should be a cycle of reflection and improvement.

Things you could use

- Reflective diary
- Peer observations
- Asking others views
- Reflective models

Why is reflection is important?

Pacey, 2016 states that reflection is an important part of your practice as it will support children in your setting and their families. You will also benefit both personally and professionally. Reflection is important to improve skills and identifying professional development needs. Improving practice will in effect improve your setting making it more effective and improving outcomes. Thus, being evident in your practice and enabling you to evidence this to in your SASS and to CIW.

"You cannot teach today the same way you did yesterday to prepare students for tomorrow." - John Dewey

Theorists

Schön and Argyris 1974 inform us that increased awareness improves a practitioners practice and the company that they work for.

Dewey 1933 originally defined reflection in education and was further developed by Schön in 1983 into reflective practice

Schön 1983 devised a theory which he called reflection on action and reflection in action. On action is looking back at the situation, so it can only be done once the situation has happened. In action is reflecting whilst taking art in the situation.

Gibbs cycle on the other hand provides a structure that guides the process of reflection. This reflective practice follows six stages seen below. (openlearn 2013)



The aims of using Gibbs' reflective cycle:

- to challenge your assumptions
 - to explore different/new ideas and approaches towards doing or thinking about things
 - to promote self-improvement (by identifying strengths and weaknesses and acting to address them)
 - to link practice and theory
- (Lia 2016)

Figure 1 - Gibb's Reflective Cycle

Positive outcomes

Reflection and self-evaluation are vital tools to practice positive guidance skills. Positive guidance is seen as quality practice according to Macfarland et al (2009).

Reflection during the event and afterwards attain better outcomes for children and their families. (Lorraine1ccc 2017).

Marbina et al 2010 tell us that research shows that positive relationships form between practitioners who participate in reflective practice and positive outcomes for children.

It is important for professionals to deepen their understanding of their own values and others to make positive changes in early learning environments.

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)	
Self-portraits, children will be asked to draw or paint a picture of themselves using mirrors.	
Nod/Amcan y gweithgaredd	Aim/Objective of the activity
For children to use a mirror to look at themselves and identify different parts of their face. This can also be linked to the Foundation Phase Profile by recognising colours and matching them, also being able to count in Welsh and English to encourage welsh language and cognitive skills.	
Eich rôl chi	Your role
• To have sound subject knowledge. • Ensure that planning and organisation support the children. • Have clear expectations based on child development, subject knowledge and individual children. • Maintain a balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. • Ensure children have time to engrossed in activities and revisit experiences. • Be aware of any potential cross-curricular opportunities. • Encourage independence. • Promote peer coaching. • Demonstrate and teach skills. • Have strategies to scaffold learning by supporting and challenging children. • Encourage reflection. • Know when and how to intervene and when to stand back.	
Agweddau cadarnhaol – pam?	Positive aspects – why?

Could could see their own eyes, nose, mouth and the rest of their face and to see how it all goes together, this is a good way of teaching children to draw basic shapes.

Children were able to experiment with different colours and shades also allows them to express themselves artistically in any style they wish. This improved cognitive abilities linking to shapes and different colours.

By making self-portraits children had the opportunity to learn who they are and how everyone is individual this is important as children begin to understand that everyone is different and unique.

Self-portraits are something personal, and are unique to your thoughts and feelings encouraging children to be independent.

By using mirrors children were able to express themselves and can see their own faces conveying different emotions this is an important well-being and emotional development which is of the utmost importance to allow children to begin expressing emotions and begin to understand them.

Agweddau heriol – pam?

Challenging aspects – why?

The activity became challenging as I was completing the task with a group of children with myself as the supervising adult. Many children wanted to join in the activity and they were very excited to use the mirrors. I only had a limited number of mirrors which meant children had to wait their turn, this is a good way of teaching turn taking linked into the FPP however a couple of children struggled with this and became frustrated. Part of the challenge was to mix different coloured paint to begin showing children how we can mix some colours to make other colours, however some children wanted to mix all the colours together which ended up in one dark colour, other children then wanted the original colours to continue with their self-portraits which meant they had to wait for me to re-fill the paint pots and clean the paintbrushes.

Pa wybodaeth arddangoswyd?
demonstrated?

What knowledge was

Most children could identify their eyes, nose, mouth, ears and hair which showed a good knowledge of their body parts. Many knew we had two eyes and two ears. Few children could identify their body parts by use and told me that they used their eyes to see, ears to listen, nose to smell and mouth to eat. Several children were able to further identify their eyelashes and eyebrow. Some children identified blue, green, yellow and red and a couple could further identify white, black brown and pink. Shapes were mentioned and also measurements such as long and short.

Pa sgiliau arddangoswyd?
demonstrated?

What skills were

Most of the children held the paintbrush with a pincer grip showing good fine motor skills. Whilst using the mirrors children could identify different emotions showing good personal and emotional skills. Children used good language skills and could talk about their drawings in simple terms. Children used everyday and mathematical language to talk about their own ideas and choices. The children followed instructions well which is linked to their cognitive ability. Some children

were able to name the colours in welsh and few knew some body parts in welsh displaying good welsh language skills. Making comparisons and identifying similarities and differences by using language such as I got brown eyes too, beginning to understanding of the world.	
Pa werthoedd arddangoswyd? demonstrated?	Which values were
All children demonstrated good participation and everyone wanted a turn. They all had fun, played and used the resources creatively. The children spoke to one and other encouraging their friends which showed good value of friendship. Some of the children worked together recognising the need work together to provide the best possible help	
Beth allai cael ei wneud yn wahanol? Pam? What could have been done differently? Why?	
In future activities, such as this one I would use smaller groups of children to able to expand on the children's knowledge effectively as I would have more time to listen and use in-action reflection. I would also ask another staff member or two to do the same activity on other tables so that more children could take part in the activity with less waiting time. Using on-action reflection I would use a fewer amount of paint choices and take the time to experiment with paint mixing in a different activity to allow the children more time to think and explore with different colours, this would then allow for more focus to be on the different parts of the body enabling myself to scaffold on other body parts and not just the facial area. It did get a bit busy and chaotic at one point as many children wanted to take part and had many questions and comments, in future I would ask that the other children take part in a different activity so that they are engaged and then swap activities to allow more of a communicational friendly space for all children.	

Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge Complete Bachelor of Arts, Early Years Education and Care	To improve knowledge in and gain higher qualification	Ensuring I attend lectures to gain the knowledge and guidance needed to complete all modules and ensuring all assignments are submitted on time.	Myself Swansea Trinity Saint David University. With support from the tutors of each module.	July 2019
2. Knowledge Community Food and Nutrition Skills for the Early Years	Improve knowledge in nutrition in the early years and then apply this knowledge in work setting to change snack and food menus in work in line with Healthy and sustainable pre-school scheme.	Access the 12 week course and attend all sessions. Complete work provided Research	Gartholwg lifelong learning centre. Course provided by Cwm Taf NHS public health.	October 2018
3. Skills Improve referencing skills	To help my skills in referencing skills are of a good standard to improve my work standard	Practice referencing. Use the referencing handbook to follow correct referencing method. If further guidance is needed, access study skills class.	Myself at home Study skills class at University	December 2018
4. Skills Managing a team effectively.	I have recently become the leader at the nursery and feel it is important to gain the skills to manage a team as I have no experience prior to this position.	To access the managing a team training on the RCT training guide. Ask for support from area manager and Manager	RCT early years training. KJ-Area manager LT- Manager	November 2018

(Skills) Time Keeping	- To improve my university assignments and ensure they are completed adequately and to deadline. - To improve my deputy leader paper work in my setting. - To improve my key children's observation books and assessments in my setting.	- Planning my work beforehand. - Dedicate adequate time to carry out each task.	- In university, in the library and in my house. - In a daily diary	- When I have a new assignment or piece of work. - Every day
(Values) Improved confidence	- To improve my current practice - To improve my communication with peers and co-workers - To improve my communication with parents	- Follow through with decisions I make. - Arrange and attend team bonding activities - Attend 'working with parent's' training	- In my setting and throughout my degree. - In my setting, with my co-workers. - With RCT training – Pontypridd Lido	- ASAP - In my next team meeting (5/7/17) - The next available course

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