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Reflections on Early Year Practice (EAEE5002)

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Reflection

Reflection practice is learning about common circumstances and problems and questions that emerge that are part of our daily life when working in an early childhood environment. It's about focusing on why and not only what happened. Decision making is also driven by it. This helps one to examine multiple facets of interactions we have to make decisions in what can be replicated, improved or altered. This helps one to develop and improve on the learning of children and build on their knowledge and skills. (Lorina, 2015).

In the field of early childhood growth, reflective practise is best defined as an ongoing phase comprising experts examining their activities in order to understand what drives children's learning and progress; as well as the influence of their own values on children's learning. (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Evidence Paper Practice Principle 8: Reflective Practice. n.d.).

Reflective practise is a method of thinking about and evaluating the practise, with the goal of questioning, altering, updating, enhancing and strengthening it. (Section 1, n.d.).

Reflective practise is all about improving the standard of the practise and the quality of the practitioners, as highlighted by the EYFS. It is not a one-stop-shop service. It is continuous. It is something that you need to do all the time. (Nursery World, n.d.).

Use of reflective practice

Reflective practise helps teachers to gain a critical view of their own methods and to continuously enhance the skills, knowledge and techniques required to produce the best results for children. (LORRAINE LCCC, 2017).

In increasing self-awareness, which is a core component of relational intelligence, and in gaining a deeper comprehension of others, reflective practise has huge advantages. Reflective practise will also help you improve creative thinking skills and promote constructive participation in work processes. (SkillsYouNeed, 2011).

The Open University say reflecting lets you improve your talents and assess their efficacy, rather than simply trying to do things like you have always done. It's about asking, in a constructive manner, what you're doing and why you're doing it, and then determining whether there's a different or more effective way to do it in the future. (www.open.ac.uk. n.d.).

"Reflective practice is an active, dynamic action-based and ethical set of skills, placed in real time and dealing with real, complex and difficult situations."

Moon, J. (1999), *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*, Kogan Page, London.

Knowledge and Skills

Reflective practice can help keep you up to date with your knowledge and skills as well as improving them. It will give you the courage to manage any duties. Keeping versatile and optimistic for your job. You will be hesitant in situations if your knowledge or skills are outdated. (E1DJ711, 2011). Reflective practice allows you to see where improvements may be needed.

The values of reflection

Reflection offers life to learning. Reflective practice allows learners to see significance and meaning and to draw comparisons between classroom interactions and actual world circumstances. Processing or contemplation allows learners to communicate with the skills they use and exercise in the classroom. It increases understanding and provides pathways for potential learning. It also strengthens their ability to adapt the skills they acquire to problems such as dispute resolution. (Stanchfield, J. 2013).

In order to enhance practice in the future, Value Based Reflective Practice is an intentional means of focusing on previous practice in the present. It allows employee participants to properly control their own well-being, endurance and enables them in their work to improve improved reflexivity. (www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk. (n.d.)).

Practitioner Prospect

To be a reflective practitioner is to be willing and willing to put ideas into reality and to look at the integration of oneself into the 'real world' of practice. This method of self-examination is an important part of the development of self-knowledge, providing a critical study of one's beliefs, feelings and actions. This helps learners to understand and recognise who they are in the light of what they are doing or intend to do, thus bridging the gap between learning (what they know) and practice (how they do it). (ResearchGate. 2021).

Continuing professional development (CPD)

In the eyes of the Welsh Government, continuing professional development is same as consistently growing of expertise and knowledge/skills to inspire and improve good practice and professional care across one's working life. It contributes to work-based and personal progress as a result of personal and career advancement reflection, helping professionals to fulfil their ability.

The main areas for growth are expected to be:

- Knowledge
- Skills and abilities
- Behavior
- Self appraisal and reflective practice

(Continuing Professional Development Principles for the early years and childcare workforce in Wales, n.d.).

Examples of reflective practices



Kolb reflective cycle (1984)

It is referred to as 'experiential learning'. The cycle of reflection, consists of doing, asking how and why, making judgment, testing. The new experiences will form the starting point for another cycle once this process has been fully undertaken. It is also a method of improving. (TeachKloud, 2019). Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984) highlights reflective practise as a tool for drawing conclusions and ideas from experience.

Reflection in action (at the time the event is happening)

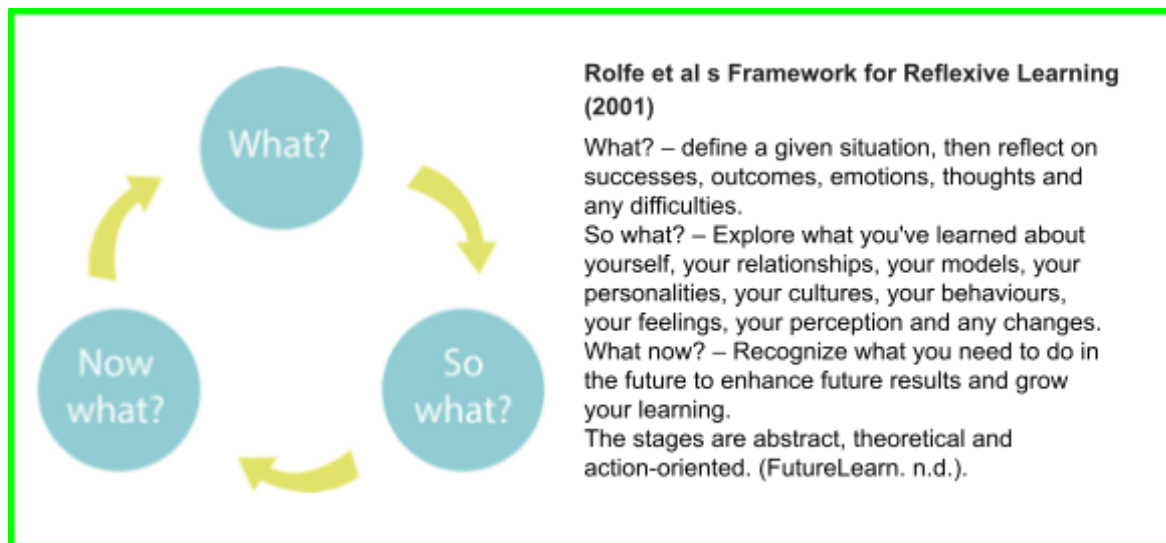
- The experience itself
- Thinking about it during the event
- Deciding how to act at the time
- Acting immediately

Reflection on action (after the event)

- Reflecting on something that has happened
- Thinking about what you might do differently if it happened again
- New information gained and/or theoretical perspectives from study that inform the reflector's experience are used to process feelings and actions

Schön model (1991)

In trying to figure out if our knowledge-in-action could have contributed to an unintended result, Schön acknowledges the value of reflecting back '(Schön, 1983). Reflection-on-action suggests that after the incident, you focus on how your interpretation of prior instruction might have driven you to the experience you had. (Cambridge International Education Teaching and Learning Team, 2019).



You create an atmosphere based on the learner through reflecting. This climate will encourage students and teachers to become creative, optimistic, committed and accountable all around you. Your level of teaching and learning will increase until you initiate the reflective process. (www.cambridge-community.org.uk. n.d.).

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Briefing paper 1

Reflective Practice in Early Years

By practising analytical work in childcare environments, practitioners are able to participate themselves in a process of lifelong learning that requires deep thought, integrity, a desire from both perspectives to see real life situations and a dedication to improvement. Providing a community that promotes reflective practise not only educators to evolve independently, but also helps facilitate improved contact with other caregivers and parents.(kidskinderyoshiro856 n.d.).

Infant and toddler caregivers should be directed by professionals to deliberate and concentrated mindful practise, which can in turn shift teachers to more sensitive and attentive caregiving activities. Reflective practice can help improve quality immensely. (Infant/Toddler Resource Guide: Professional Development Providers Promoting Reflective Practice. (2018).

“Reflection is a time to slow down, to see what can be learned if we take the time to carefully look at and listen to ourselves, and those with whom we work.” (Parlakian, 2001, p. 16). By drawing on the talents and abilities of educators and offering a greater appreciation of the nuances involved in their duties and obligations, reflective practise facilitates continuing professional learning and development. (Kennedy, A. 2018).

Dewey (1933) indicated that in calling for fluidity of thought, people dealing with children should not necessarily depend on things only because they have been achieved in the past. He indicated that one perfect way to do something is impossible to occur and professionals ought to use their ‘reflective knowledge’ to figure out what works and what does not, by constantly following a problem - solving approach.

Much later, the idea of 'trained artistry' evolved by Schon (1987, p.22). More precisely, he found out that practitioners face particular situations and make choices based on prior experience, which is why reflection is a mechanism that is rooted both in practise and in practise.

Reflective practice is an integral part of the work and can benefit children as well as the environment they are in. Both individually and professionally, practitioners would also benefit. Work that is reflective would help practitioners maintain and constantly enhance.

“Reflective practice is a specific skill that comes into your own personal development as well as your professional development.” (BusinessBall.com. 2021).

As a consequence, making assessments and adjusting practice is essential to the successful implementation of the Early Years Foundation Period, whether the

children are studied or scrutinised by clinicians themselves. Focusing on a particular child is a key aspect of the EYFS and, according to Tina Jefferies, managing director of the Red Space Organization, who has developed a reflective practise coaching method, workers should extend the central approach to involve themselves. The EYFS reflects on the individual person, she says, and we need to provide ways to help the child thrive and flourish in its own individuality. In our own private experience, the same is true. (Nursery World. n.d.).

It helps practitioners to understand and acknowledge their own strengths and shortcomings, and to use it to direct on-going learning. By way of meditation, practitioners can build your expertise in self-directed learning, increase confidence and improve the level of treatment that they are willing to offer. (Koshy, K., Limb, C., Gundogan, B., Whitehurst, K. and Jafree, D.J. 2017).

Reflective practise encourages environments and professionals to assess and enhance the consistency of the provision for children and their families, provides an opportunity to introduce innovative ideas and activities that promote learning and growth, provides an opportunity to track and review practise ensuring that the order to deliver a competent quality service.

Reflective practice is about preserving a mind as free as it is possible, and maybe you will be shocked. From a different viewpoint, see things: this may be the children's, or their family. A true eye-opener. It's going to improve your understanding of the circumstance and how it looks or is experienced, by some, and may be a genuine eye-opener. (Maria Marraffa Hudson 2010).

A 'reflective practitioner' is someone who, at frequent times, looks back at the job they perform and the work process, and discusses how they can change. They're focusing on the job they've done. (accounts.google.com. n.d.).

In order to become a reflective practitioner, the person needs to learn the skills and knowledge of reflective practise to become a reflective practitioner, which are:

- ❖ Self evaluation

- ❖ Description
- ❖ Critical appraisal
- ❖ Synthesizing
- ❖ Evaluation

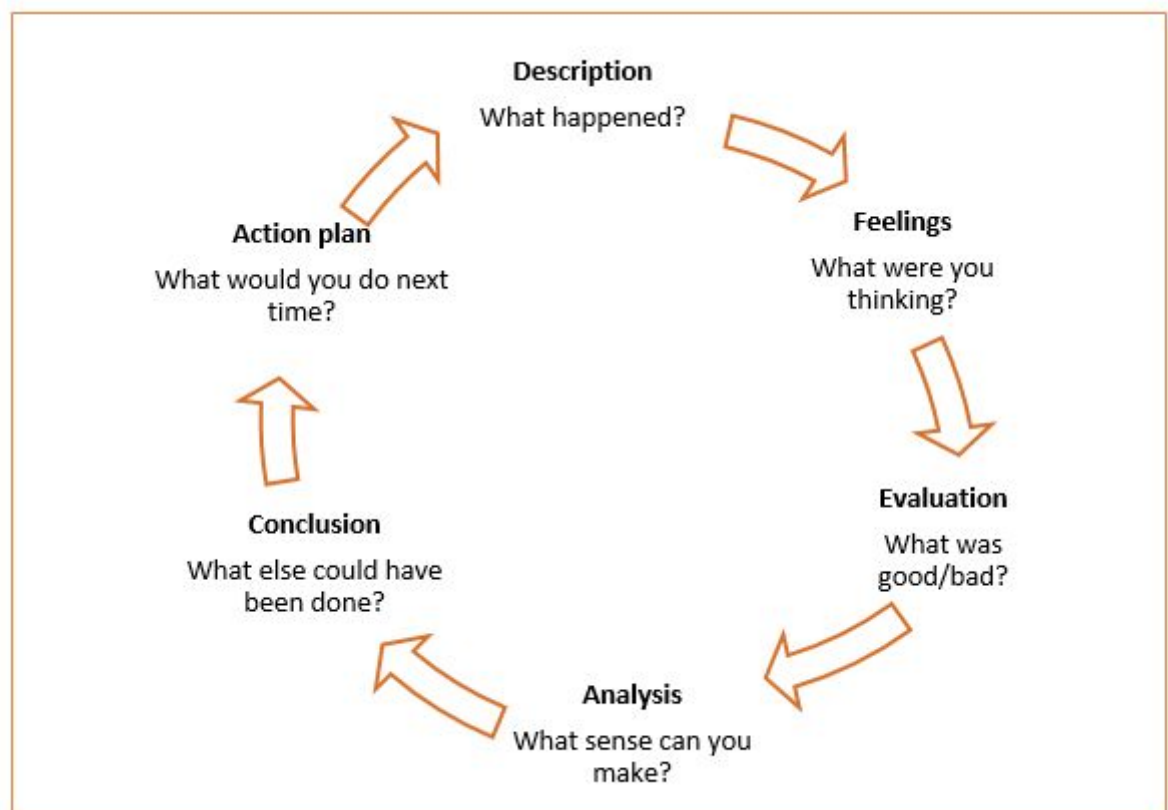
To get more information and in depth analysis look at:

http://iicrd.org/sites/default/files/resources/Becoming_a_reflective_practitioner_0.pdf

Gibbs reflective cycle (1988) can be very effective in helping you go through the stages of your experience or activity:

- Description - what happened?
- Feelings - what did you think and feel?
- Evaluation - what about the experience was positive and bad?
- Analysis - What kind of sense can you make of the situation?
- Conclusion - What more should/could you have done?
- Action plan—what would you do if the situation happened again?

(Kelly, 2015).



1. Summary of what took place. For those to understand a brief contemplation the characterization is around.

2. Feelings, what your feelings and opinions are. My opinion on the summary using skills to verify my interpretation, my thoughts and my understanding in relation to my reflection opinions
3. Evaluation of the experience, what was good and what was bad. This enables to give us an opinion about what I think is both good and negative and on a situation gives me insight into whether or not I have more or less justification to correct before the circumstance is rising.
4. Study how you can make sense of the circumstance or issue. Analyzes the theme or issue would include an overview of my condition.
5. Conclusion, what else was I capable of doing? I may, after a complete note of the subject, to develop my understanding and imagination, see where my talents are needed.
6. If it rose again, what would you do? Intervention. Be more careful on what I need, and how to provide ample time for input and fields that I don't understand and ask if I have problems.

Andy Williams, SSAT Senior Education lead, says the response to questions, along with the data supporting the responses, allows prospective practitioners to build their accreditation portfolio, thus validating their study practices. As seen in Gibbs' model, each of the parameters offers the questions to ask ourselves, challenge our conclusions, encourage us to discuss fresh ideas and test new concepts. (SSAT 2016).

A significant feature of clinical practise instruction is the promotion of the opportunity to focus in action (while doing something) and on action (after you have done it). Its motivation is seen as an especially significant part of the role of the instructor of practise. Reflection includes a conversation between students and their peers, students and family, and practitioners, all of which may offer invaluable guidance required for reflection. In order to continue to focus on their learning pupils, it is important to enable them to make sense of new knowledge in relation to their current understanding. The learning cycle created by Kolb (1984) is a useful and easy method for demonstrating the relation between reflection and better learning for students. (Word Development 2019).

According to the Welsh government, continuing professional development (CPD) of practitioners outside recruitment and initial training/qualification is an area of specialisation important for associations, their employees, children, young people and their families. Reasons following:

- ★ Enable workers to maintain up to date awareness of the sector
- ★ Creating a professional and bilingual population
- ★ Continue raising standards
- ★ Respect professionals by improving and preserving their expertise and skills
- ★ Improving the recruiting and training of professionals
- ★ Ensure that the sector satisfies the necessary criteria
- ★ Increase memory/awareness, experience, comprehension, enhance performance and efficiency and lead to learning for a lifetime

(Continuing Professional Development Principles for the early years and childcare workforce in Wales. n.d.).

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Reflective log

My activity is only once or twice a week. I look after one five year old child, who is in early years, after school hours. I take care of her for a couple of hours (1 to 3 hours) a day. My activity placement is in my own setting of choice, which is my home.

The aim of my activity is to help holistically build the psychological, mental, cognitive and physical needs of a child in order to create a strong and broad base for lifelong learning and well-being. Another aim would also be to improve my practitioner skills, values and knowledge through the activity. Also, to have quality care and warmth in an atmosphere that is healthy and welcoming and to preserve and inspire children to reflect on good behaviour. The objective of my aim is to provide a safe environment for the child and parent to be in by establishing a Relationship with Parents by engaging parents in child care and exchanging knowledge and questions.

As a role in early years practice, my job is to lead children down the course of their desires, encouraging their academic and social growth. Being part of early childhood means that you have devoted yourself to your own personal growth and development and to doing the best for the child. One of my main roles is also to be there for the child and parent/carer when needed.

The advantages of my activity were the partnerships I created with the child and parent to make them feel comfortable so that they can freely access enjoyable experiences that help them learn in their favourite style of learning. In my activity as I was taking care of just one child, it allowed me to focus on them and have a one on one. Seeing them learn how to share and make friends, being autonomous so that they can do almost everything about themselves-dressing, dining, drinking, choosing things they want, accessing equipment to make and just loving having children have fun. Additionally, it was in my setting so I knew my surroundings and there were also others in my setting helping out and making the child comfortable. I have also gained more knowledge and experience through my activity about myself, the child and early years practice.

The disadvantages of my activity placement was that as I was in my comfortable setting, it takes time for a child to also be comfortable in the environment. The challenge that I faced was that I would get distracted on other things as I was not just taking care of the child but also my family and so would the child. That resulted in not having enough quality time spent with the child. Those who work in the early years industry know full well that any job involving kids is a huge challenge in itself. Coping with tantrums, habits, hectic eating and bad behaviour is not easy as the child's parent/parents/carer is not there to help console.

I demonstrated my knowledge in my activity within my setting. I used my knowledge of reflection by taking notes, trial and error and learning more about the child, their needs, interests each time. After reflecting on them, I enhanced them the next time I saw them to see the change that created a pattern. I also demonstrated my knowledge in my activity by using my knowledge of excellent communication, listening skills, good organisational skills to plan the day. As well as having the ability to inspire and enthuse children in early years practice. Ensuring that children are able to replicate their events. Give kids their time and chances to improve their talents. Using the possibilities of learning already 'made in' and accessible like how they come home and place their belongings or helping out chores. I demonstrated my knowledge of understanding different diversities and lifestyles as not everyone's the same.

I demonstrated my skills of communication in my activity. I encourage children to fit in by inviting children and their parents or caregivers by name and with a smile, attempting to see my environment from their eyes and adapting my strategies to make the child settle in and feel 'at home' in my setting. I did this by tactile reassurance and comfort items. To comfort parents or guardians who are reluctant to leave their child in my care, I shared knowledge and experiences/activities about what the child has been doing. I demonstrated listening skills by answering and reacting to the child's different needs. I also demonstrated my skills in my activity and setting, when using my imagination and creativity so that the child can enjoy themselves and to keep the child interested. As well as allowing the child to share

their imaginations and creativity to show their opinions and what they say matters.

I demonstrated my values by making together and allowing the child to make decisions. As none of the child's parents or carers are present, I let the child have its own individuality and independence to let them grow by themselves to learn and gain confidence to prepare them for future situations/environment. For example, changing their clothes or going to the toilet, simple things. To build their self- knowledge, self-esteem and increase their faith in themselves by encouraging them to take chances, combining their own talents and talking about their experiences and reading about them. Another value I demonstrated in my activity was to encourage children to learn social skills and to share in my setting or home by presenting and showing positivity, sharing things and including others in the activities. Getting everyone involved. When you model good behaviour and social skills it gives children a great example for them to follow, if they see it.

If I had to/could experience this again I would probably challenge myself more to experience and gain more skills, values and knowledge. In order to do that I would like to work in a different environment setting like a school or early childcare center. Working in a different setting that I was not already familiar with could create new ideas for me to plan and try. If I was in a different setting I probably would not have got distracted easily and had more quality time with one on one with the child. If I had more one on one with a child I could help them more and benefit them more as they would also be benefiting me as well. Something else I would probably do differently is to have more children to see how I cope in the situation. I should have planned/organised my activities better as I did have a routine but I could have organised a plan around both mine and the child's routine.

Identifying areas for a personal & professional development plan

I would want to work in early years as I enjoy working with children and I find joy in the experience of working with early years education. The job sector I want to get a job/career is to be a nursery assistant. I need to volunteer in school or early childcare to gain more experience required to be capable in the industry. I need to be able to improve and balance work and work life, so that I can achieve the best in both professional and personal life and not get distracted, which then lacks on both leading to not the best possible outcomes. I shall also get some training to get me prepared and knowledgeable for the job. Helping me be trained and experience will enhance my skills to be the best and provide the best quality of work to early years. If I can be better than that would lead to also helping the children becoming better. To understand areas in the early years childcare industry. I need to be more

organised and plan my activities around routines so that I do not miss something out. If I plan and stay organised I would be more prepared and go through everything more efficiently. Being organised can help understand what is required and when it is required, meeting the early years needs. My goal would be to achieve a good placement within the industry. Professionally I would like to help children prepare and build their confidence. I would professionally like to have a good impact on child's life to help them and their families for the future.