

What is Reflective Practice and why is it important?

For reflection to work it needs to have a good and meaning full learning objective as well as being relevant to the area of profession.

Bound (2010:25) once stated that something that is not being reflected on is certainly bad because Bond (2010:25) believes that there is only one definitive meaning of reflective practice that is referred to as being good.

Dr. Itamar Shatz.stated with in the article Effectiviology- Reflection Practice: thinking about the way you do things, that by being able to reflect on performance shows good reflective practice and by reflecting allows the areas that worked well to stand out as well as the areas that need improvements. It is important to have a good and clear understanding on what reflection and reflective practice means, as well as how to carry these skills out effectively. Once you have a clear understand on what they both mean it will allow you to achieve all of the benefits from reflection and reflective practice. The benefits will show where there is room for improvements, have a better outcome and to expand performance from everyone involved.

According to skills You Need reflective practice is a similar skill to learning from experiences. Reflective practice allows time to think about what has been completed, how it was completed and what can be done differently to improve performance next time.

According to city and guilds reflective practice is to look back on things that the practitioner has taken part in and allows them to be able to think about what they did or discussed, what the outcome is from what they are doing and how they can change it for the future. They also believe that emotions are important factor to reflective practice, this is because emotions allow people to express how they feel and what they think about certain things. This will help when it comes to reflective practice because it will allow them to ask the following question for example what are the learning outcome's that they have planned to get out of this activity? And what areas of development if any does this planned activity focus on? After the practitioner has completed the task, they have planned for they will be able to look back on it and see what worked, what can they change to improve it for the next time, which part of the task worked better than they first expected and did everyone get the outcome of this activity? By completing this reflection, the practitioner can make sure that they are taking the correct steps to becoming the best professional practitioner possibly.

When a practitioner is carrying out their reflective practice it is useful to have the following questions near so that they can make sure they cover each area to get the most effective outcome from their reflection. This will show them and others that they have understood what it is they have done and how to make sure they make the correct changes for the future.

Theory and reflective models on reflective practice.

Gibbs' made his version on reflective cycle back in 1988, when he was the leader in his department in Huddersfield University. He was the leader in the behavioural and social science department at the time of coming up with his reflective cycle. Gibbs' reflective cycle is set out into six different stages, each stage as important as the rest. The six stages are, Stage one: - description, stage two:- feelings, stage three:- evaluation, stage four:- analysis, stage five:- conclusion and finally stage six:- plan. These stages are helpful to an early year's practitioner when it comes to critically analysing their performance. Gibbs' also believes that it is important to reflect on their day as soon as possible because if this is not carried out then you are risking losing the learning potential.

Kolb (1984) believes that experiences help students to be able to define their own learning through being able to reflect on their own knowledge which as a result allows them to be able to expand and improve their own experiences for the future. Kolb also sets his theory's in to four stages of learning which are stage one:- "concrete experiences" Stage two:- "reflective observation", Stage three:- "abstract conceptualization and finally stage four:- "active experimentation". Each stage plays a big part for students to carry out relevant steps to become the best early years practitioner they can.

How can Reflective Practice support the development as a professional and improve the quality in early years.

Tarrant (2013) believes that to be professional it takes more a lot more than what someone can do, it is also about who they are, what values they have and how well they perform as a practitioner. You can get and inside look at someone's values by they way they act, their attitude and how easy they become influenced. We as early years practitioners are important role models to young children and that is why it is extremely important to be aware of how their own personal values come across to them. It is only when they have time to sit down and reflect on their performance that's they can see how their values are being passed on to the young children and how they are easily influenced by their actions as well.

Professional reflection can be very useful, this can be carried out either individually, practice reflection or as a team. Carrying out reflection as a team is something that should be completed regularly to make sure everyone who works in the practice agrees with what they believe is working, how they are performing, what works well as a team and what they believe needs to be changed to make sure everyone is working to their full potential.

Farrell, Thomas S. C has stated that reflective practice is a practitioners guide to knowing that their teaching skills are working and whether they are coming across effectively or whether they need to change the way they teach. Reflection allows practitioners to see where they are, what they want to achieve, whether they are achieving it and how they can get to where they want to be. Farrell, Thomas S. C encourage more practitioners to carry out reflection to make sure they are carrying out the highest value of care and professionalism.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle



University of Manitoba, 2022, (Accessed on 16th October 2022)

This is an example of how the University of Manitoba describes they way in which they carry out their reflection, it shows the steps in a circle on what you should think about when reflecting on something a practitioner has completed.

The values of a professional practitioner in the early years sector

Brock (2012) has strong values and principles of an early year's practitioner and has been able to put these values under seven different headings. His values are Knowledge, this is something that everyone has but needs to be able to expand throughout their life and this is because information in early years is changing all of the time, so it is important to keep your knowledge up to date. Another heading is Qualifications, training and professional development, Skills, Autonomy, Values, Ethics and Rewards. Each heading all work together to create the best practitioner. Following these values in early years settings along with their own values will shape them in to strong and passionate practitioners that will allow them to develop their own skills and knowledge as well as allowing them to help other practitioners in their setting.

The values of a professional practitioner can be a range of different things due to everyone having their own expectations, but according to the University of Bradford they believe that the values of a professional practitioner are to always be punctual. Being punctual means that the practitioner is always on time, always prepared for the day. They will also be reliable and honest, as a professional practitioner it is their responsibility to be the voice for some children who might be none-verbal or for a child who is not confident to stand up for their rights. The Practitioner will have to have a good understanding of the children's needs as well as their rights. Another value of a professional practitioner is how they dress, someone who dresses in a more formal way is seen to be respected more than someone who dresses less formal. This value is one that can cause some disagreements between practitioners because the way someone choice to dress as long as it is respectful should not define how professional a practitioner is or is not, a practitioner should not be judged due to their clothing.

Promoting reflective practice in early years

Edwards (1998-2022) believes that's reflective practice is needed more today than it has ever before, the reason for this is because nurseries and school settings are being faced with a very large number of children who have additional needs along with new rules and regulations and new changes within the new curriculum for England and Wales. With the new changes being implemented within the childcare sector reflective practice is more important to see what is working and what areas possibly changes need to be made and to allow everyone to know what areas need to be focused on for improvements. Due to covid-19 the way in which practitioners work has changed and early years practitioners now have more barriers in their way so reflective practice can help to show whether these new steps in which they must take are effectively working or not. Edwards (1998-2022) also believes that reflective practice is important and that everyone in early years should reflect on their own practice and performance to improve their learning experience as well as ensuring staff are safe and happy as well as feeling fully supported.

According to the Cambridge Assessment reflection is a basic part of teaching as well as learning. Reflection helps practitioners to become aware of their own failings or arears in which they need to expand on. This will help them to become the best practitioner they can be because they will constantly be learning. Reflection is the best type of learning for anyone, this allows you to see what is working and what is not working so that they can make the relevant changes. By carrying out regular reflection it is helping to make sure the setting is providing the correct care for each child's needs and rights.

Conclusion

Reflection is something that people have been doing for years and years to improve their knowledge and understanding as well as improve professional in a wide range of professions. Reflection is not something people do as a professional, this is something that can be carried out by everyone on what ever they do, Reflection allows you to improve your own performance as well as improve a business. Kinsella has been doing reflection since 1991 while she was working as an occupational therapist, Kinsella said that reflection helped a lot when faced with challenging situations. She stated that when she first started working reflection was not given the correct amount of time and attention it needed and believes that in some cases this is still failing in some sectors. Kinsella said that Schon (1985, 1987) describe reflection as a swamps and that they are messy because this is something that needs more attention and practitioners need to learn how to effectively reflect for the outcome to be worthwhile.

Reflection is something that can be carried out individually or as a team or even as a whole practice which is very helpful and effective if done correctly and professionally. By reflecting as a team or as a whole practice will give an early year's practitioner the feedback and suggestions from others around them that will also help them to become a good early year's practitioner. Reflection as a whole practice is a good opportunity to make sure the setting is providing the highest quality of care that parents and careers require.

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