

Element 2 Reflective log

Brief description of the activity
The activity I have chosen to reflect on is baking shortbread with babies aged twelve to eighteen months. This activity has taken place in a nursery setting, with three babies and myself, which complies with the legal ratio of adults to children, as according to Optimus Education (2019), this is 1:3.
Aim/Objective of the activity
The aim of this activity is to help to develop the children's knowledge, skills and values in various areas through the play activity, for example, number, language and motor skills. Bruce (2011) discusses the importance of learning through play, and views that play enables children to become involved in more abstract thinking and find different ways of doing things, as it also helps children to problem solve and to experiment. This activity will do this by letting them experiment and see what happens when they add in different ingredients, mix them together, roll out the dough and press shapes into it.
Your role
My role in this activity is the role of a nursery practitioner, key worker and the leader of the activity. I will demonstrate what to do with the different items and ingredients, encouraging the children to explore everything and take part in the different stages.
Positive aspects – why?
Overall I feel as though this activity went extremely well, as all three children enjoyed the activity and took part. One of the positive aspects of this was that it was with a small group which ensured that there were plenty of things for each child to do, and the waiting times for their turn were short. Another positive aspect of this activity is that this covered a wide range of knowledge, skills and values, meaning that there were many learning opportunities throughout. A third positive aspect is that this activity can be repeated without it becoming boring as the recipes can be changed. This means that practitioners can record how a child's development has improved in each area from doing this activity over again.
Challenging aspects – why?
During this activity there were a few challenging aspects. One of these were that babies do not want to take turns, meaning that they would sometimes become impatient when they wanted to mix the ingredients together, but another child was doing it first. Another challenging aspect was trying to ensure the children remained engaged, especially while waiting their turn, and making sure that they were interested in what was being done. This was done by singing songs about the activity. A third aspect that was challenging was that one of the children had an egg allergy, however this was solved by using a recipe that did not contain eggs. It also can be challenging to find recipes that do not contain ingredients that are unsafe to be consumed when they are not cooked, as babies tend to experiment by putting things into their mouths, and this could become dangerous.

What knowledge was demonstrated?
During the activity, the babies demonstrated and built their knowledge of what the different utensils and ingredients were and what to do with them. They did this by watching me demonstrate how to pour the ingredients into the bowl, mixing, rolling out the dough and pressing shapes into it, which then they copied to demonstrate that they had now gained this knowledge. They also demonstrated their ability to count, through counting the ingredients and the shapes together after being asked “how many?” Another area of knowledge the children demonstrated was their knowledge of different words, as they were able to say words such as “spoon” and “bowl” from past experiences, and then able to repeat new words such as “mix”, “pour” and “roll”, and understand what the words mean and what actions to do for the words.
What skills were demonstrated?
Throughout this activity, various skills were demonstrated. These include gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Their gross motor skills were demonstrated by mixing the ingredients together as they used their whole arm to move the spoon around the bowl, by rolling out the dough using a rolling pin and by lifting the ingredients and pouring them into the bowl. Their fine motor skills were demonstrated through picking up the smaller ingredients and by making the shapes in the dough. The children demonstrated their listening skills during this activity, as they listened to my instructions, such as when told “put in one”. And followed the instructions to show that they were listening.
Which values were demonstrated?
The children began to demonstrate values such as turn-taking, as they listened and understood when being told to pass the bowl to another child. Some children demonstrated this value more than others, as one child was initially reluctant to share and take turns, however, throughout the activity was able to demonstrate this value also. Another value that was demonstrated by the babies was patience, during their wait for their turns, as they watched their peers while they had a turn and didn’t become too impatient throughout the entire activity.
What could have been done differently? Why?
Using Schon’s (1991) reflective model described by Cambridge Assessment International Education (2018), through reflection in action, I felt as though the children were becoming impatient at the beginning while waiting their turn, as I didn’t have anything planned for them to do during this time, therefore I had to improvise and sing songs with them during this time. Through this reflection I was able to do this, however I could have planned for different things for them to do beforehand. Through Schon’s (1991) reflection on action, also stated by Cambridge Assessment International Education (2018), I could have also extended the activity by decorating the shortbread biscuits with icing or sprinkles, allowing the children to experiment with mark making, and enabling them to further develop their fine motor skills through picking up the toppings.

What is Reflection?

Reflection is described by the Oxford Dictionary (2019) as “serious thought or consideration” about a past experience or event. The Open University further describes this as a way of assessing yourself. UEFAP (2019) note that the purpose of reflection is to learn from these experiences.

A professional practitioner is interpreted by Kelly (2015) who views a professional early year's practitioner as vital in ensuring all children are meeting their personal developmental goals. Effective Practitioner (2019) supports this view and describes a professional practitioner as someone who is willing to be a lifelong learner, who will support others to develop their knowledge, skills and values.

Knowledge –

- Early years qualification
- Each child's development goals
- Any outstanding information such as allergies, illnesses, bereavement etc.

(Early Years Careers, 2019)

Skills –

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Independence
- Listening
- Organisational
- Time management
- Problem solving

(Parenting UK, 2018)

Values -

- Caring nature
- Compassionate
- Reliable
- Empathetic
- Sympathetic
- Respect
- Compassion
- Patience
- Kindness

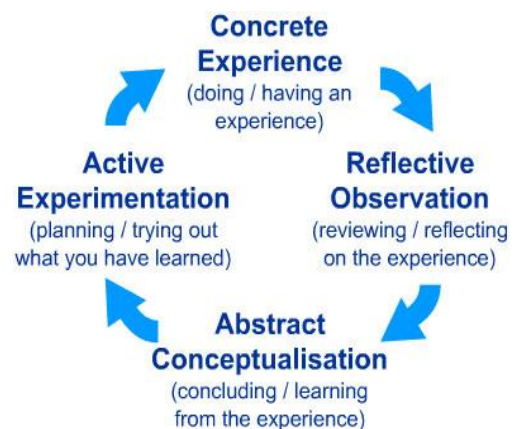
(Plume Avenue Nursery, 2019)

Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1998)



<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/reflective-writing-gibbs/>

Kolb Reflective Model (1984)



<https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) describes themselves as “the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales”. They inspect and take action to improve the quality of services. Their core values include respect, caring, integrity, professional and fair. They view that a professional practitioner must demonstrate that they can meet the needs of the children and must have the skills and experience needed in order to do this, and must have the knowledge of the need and preferences of individual children, as part of their National Minimal Standards (2016).

Estyn is also a company who inspect various settings. They provide the Welsh Government with advice and guidance. They promote best practice through case studies, and view that children and young people should be the centre of a setting and everything they do, as well as stating that “all professionals working with children and young people must have a shared responsibility in working to prevent escalation of need.”

Through a case study by Estyn, they have described good practice as continuously developing the knowledge and skills of practitioners, as well as having a close relationship with the children’s parents and regularly self-evaluating and reflecting on practice.

Wales Pre-school Providers Association (PPA) support settings and families throughout children’s development, encouraging participation. They work with the Welsh Government and share their idea of good practice. In their “Quality For All” factsheet, Wales PPA discuss what is good practice. They view this as staff modelling positive social interactions, challenging examples of anti-discriminatory practice and stereotyping and explaining children’s actions, feelings and intentions to them.

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Element 4 Personal Development Plan

Area for further development (provide further details)	Why?	How?	Who/Where?	When?
1. Knowledge - Masters in Early Childhood studies	To enhance my knowledge in early childhood studies and to further my education. It is also necessary in order to complete a PhD.	Go to a university to study a two years MA degree part-time, alongside working. After graduating with BA Honours in Early years education and care.	Manchester Metropolitan University (accessed 2019)	Entry of September 2020.
2. Knowledge - PhD in Education	To gain further knowledge and understanding of young children through primary research, and be able to go into research based work once completed.	Complete a Masters degree in Early Childhood Studies after current degree, apply for PhD courses and complete a three year full time PhD course.	University College London (Accessed 2019)	Entry of September 2022.
3. Skills - Organisation	To feel more prepared for lectures and work in the future, to know where everything is and in order to complete university work to my highest standard.	I will do this by getting into a routine where I organise my notes after every lecture and regularly organise the other areas of my life.	I will do this myself, however if I need help I will ask for advice from my peers or from student services at The University of Wales, Trinity Saint David (2019)	I will aim to start now and continue to do this throughout my education.
4. Skills - Time Management	I would like to develop my time management skills in order to complete my university work to my highest standard and avoid rushing and leaving assignments until the last minute.	I will do this by setting out timetables for doing assignments and other university work, through to do lists and through reminders to follow this.	I will aim to do this myself and also contact student services at The University of Wales, Trinity Saint David (2019) for extra support. I can also find timetable templates online, such as at Sussex.ac.uk (2019) and use this to help.	I will aim to start now and continue to do this throughout my education.

5. Values - Patience	I would like to become more patient with myself when completing work as I tend to rush things. I also would like to become more patient when working in a group.	I will do this by thinking about the outcomes of being patient compared to being impatient.	I aim to practice and work on this when I am working in a team with other people, and when working on my own on assignments.	I will aim to start now and continue this throughout my education and work.
6. Values - Empathy	I would like to develop my empathy values, as I feel like I am already empathetic, however I would like to further this and include this in my work with children, mainly becoming more empathetic towards the parents of the children as this can enhance parent/practitioner relationships.	I will do this by comparing situations of other people to my own experiences, reflecting on how I felt during my own experience and understanding how other people may be thinking. I will also remind myself during these situations that everybody deals with things differently.	I will put this into practice through work and through my peer relationships.	I will aim to start now and continue to develop this practice throughout the next few years.
7. Other? - Makaton	I would like to develop my knowledge of Makaton and gain this as one of my skills, as I feel as though it would enhance my practice with children.	I will do this by joining a course and taking part in Makaton classes, practicing them at home and with children.	I will attend a class, such as with the Makaton charity (2019).	To be completed by September 2020.

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