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Taylor, Susan M., Dyer, Mary A. and Frankland, Sharon

Building a vision of early years practice: How can reflection support this process

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What is Reflection?

Reflection is the process of critically examining one's own practice, specifically asking:

- does our practice achieve our aims
- who has defined these aims
- do they fit with our own vision of good practice

Reflection offers the practitioner the means of using their practice to learn from constantly – **“Because I pay attention to my practice I am open to what is unfolding. Being open I am ...curious and ready to consider new possibilities. Every situation becomes an opportunity for learning.”** (Johns, 2004, p.6)

“A continuously improving setting will have well-qualified and experienced staff who understand and engage in informed reflective practice” (DCSF, 2008, p.8).

Senior practitioners achieving Early Years Professional Status, will become reflective practitioners who **“review, analyse and evaluate their own and others’ practice”** (CWDC, 2008, p.5).

Effective reflection requires the practitioner to have a vision of practice within which to evaluate their own actions, i.e. **“a statement of desirable practice made up of beliefs and values ... that gives meaning and direction to everyday practice”** (Johns, 2004, p.45).

This research focuses on how the skills of reflection can be taught and supported for practitioners with little or no experience of working in the early years sector. These ‘novices’ are disadvantaged by their lack of a vision of practice. By concentrating on supporting their reflective skills, we hope their vision will emerge.

BUILDING A VISION OF EARLY YEARS PRACTICE: HOW CAN REFLECTION SUPPORT THIS PROCESS?

Case Studies

Interviews and questionnaires

Focus Groups

- Identify key elements of early years communities of practice
- Identify barriers and issues when beginning to reflect
- Identify support needed to develop a vision of practice

- Role of mentor in early years workplace learning
- Model of reflection for early years practice

Expert

Student

Learning is:
situated
social
distributed

Setting

University

Early Years Professional or Qualified Teacher Status

Learning from the workplace

Currency of teaching and learning

Learning to learn

Learning through reflection

Quality Provision

Recognition of mentoring

Sector Engagement