# Reflective practice

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| Anne Stonehouse: | My name is Anne Stonehouse. Welcome to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Principle video series. The Framework is for all professionals and services working with children from birth to eight years. In the videos you see each Practice Principle in action. It's important to remember that all the principles intersect and overlap. Combined, they guide professional practice. This video should be used in conjunction with the Practice Principle Guide on Reflective Practice. The guide is on the Department of Education and Training website. |
| [00:01:00] | Reflecting on information that supports, informs and enriches decision making is fundamental to good practice. Reflective practice occurs at every point in the Early Years Planning Cycle. This involves reflection on practice, and reflection in practice. Applying the early years planning cycle can increase early childhood professional's awareness of bias and inequities and support them to uphold the rights of all children to become successful learners. This process may validate existing practices or challenge less effective practices and drive improvements. |
|  | Today, we'll be visiting several services. The professionals, families and children at these sites will help you consider reflective practice and how this relates to your service. |
| Helen Walter:  [00:02:00] | I learned a lot through reflecting and I reflect every day, if not after each child and I wonder, I try and analyse in myself, what it is that I'm uncomfortable about or what worked well with that client and why did that not same situation, why could I not replicate that with another family? In reflecting it, it's a great opportunity for me to learn about how I can do things differently. Checking with the parent, was that something that was congruent with what they thought they would be when they attended the service? |
| Sharyn Veale: | Reflection on our work has been something as a team we've worked really hard on in the last probably year or two. It's enabled that culture of us to actually be really honest about what we're doing and what we're not doing. Sometimes I think as young teams, we quite often have a staff team who feel they need to please somebody and they need to write the right things and they don't want to put something negative down and we've really built now a culture where it's okay to say that something's not okay. |
| [00:03:00] | With critical reflection and professional development, that's been something that's taken a little time for us to really build on. We've also had some external people come in and actually have large conversations and large training sessions on what reflective practices really are. |
| Liz Suda: | One bit of advice I can give you is leave your ego at the door and listen to criticism. I think that that's built into our practice that we have to be open to improving our practice all the time. I think every classroom teacher does that all the time, don't they? Even if they don't have the outside person telling them that didn't work, in themselves they're saying, next time I think I'll do that differently because it will work better. |
| Emma:  [00:04:00] | Ways that make me learn best with my critical reflection would definitely be discussion with other educators. If another educator challenges me or presents me with a different perspective than my own, it's great and that's what I love. To have a good discussion about the way people do things and having the opposite opinion of another – it really opens your mind to how they think and how that may work, talking and reflecting on things and having discussions and learning, which I feel is a really important part of planning and how to grow as a teacher and ensure that the children are getting the best from their education. |
|  | Maybe next year it will be about ensuring that it's not so much Christmas related. At moment it seems that a lot of activities are Christmas related so it's reflecting on that and going, maybe next year just doing a small simple present for their parents that they can wrap up and take and maybe one other activity but just ensuring that the room isn't totally Christmas overdone, because I wonder how much learning is coming out of that, and that can be a concern is whether they're learning enough or whether it's just Christmas activities and the learning's stunted. |
| Anne Stonehouse:  [00:05:00] | Professionals become more effective through critical reflection and a strong culture of inquiry. Reflective professionals invite and encourage different opinions and views. Change occurs when professionals draw upon new expertise and perspectives to support children's learning, health and development, keeping the child's best interests at the forefront. This includes reflecting with children and families as collaborators. Reflection supports intentional practice that is thoughtful, purposeful and deliberate. |
| Mel: | For example, as a large group recently in our staff meeting, we filmed our educators doing what you'd call, I guess, intentional teaching and working with children and we used a range of different theories to look at what that, what might be underpinning that practice and what, how else you might understand that particular practice. I think through that experience educators learnt further about what the intentions of the other educator that was working with the child might have been thinking. It was really an opportunity for us to hear each other's thinking. |
| [00:06:00]  Linda Davison: | Our focus for professional development has been on trying to find those opportunities for people, so moving away more and more from the half day or the one day sessions that kind of skim the surface and moving more to perhaps PD opportunities that go over a period of time. I'm thinking of the Action Research group that met for over a period of months to follow up on stuff that they were doing, sending a group of two or three or even four people together and that has had a really clear impact on the way that, both on the learning that they have, that they experience, what they're take in because they feed off each other. |
| [00:07:00] | What one person hears one way, another may hear another and that promotes dialog and discussion and reflection about those and makes that learning more concrete, but also then when they bring their learning back to the centre, there's much more likelihood that it will result in practice change. |
| Anne Stonehouse: | Reflective practice is an ongoing dynamic process of thinking honestly, deeply and critically about all aspects of professional practice with children and families. Professionals use theories and new information to support their reflection. Professional reflection is facilitated when leaders and mentors actively collaborate with other professionals. |
| Michelle Boudrie: | How are you feeling about your knowledge on autism, because I know you have experience working with other children with disabilities. |
| Janani Nathan:  [00:08:00] | Before but again, each child is different, you know, I had to look at it in a what is best for, what worked with another child, it may not work with Grace, so I need to look at things, not to make any assumptions. Children are very capable learners and they surprise us all the time. |
| Joanne Richmond: | We need to understand what is best practice in education, what are the relevant theories, what does the research say. I'm not just teaching this spelling program because I like it and this is the way that I do it. I'm teaching this spelling program because it works and this is the research behind it. Teachers use research now, they understand it. We talk about… actively talk about research. To have a learning community, I think, involves the parents, the school staff and the students working together with that belief that we can all learn and that might involve the parents learning as well, so offering some learning for the parents around perhaps how to help my child at home with their reading, how to help your child at home to become better at their maths. |
| Anne Stonehouse:  [00:09:00] | Building a learning community committed to continuous quality improvement is part of reflective practice. Strategies for building a learning community include keeping reflective journals, holding meetings, mentoring and participating in professional learning experiences and research. In learning communities, there is an understanding among all participants, professionals, families and children that everyone is both a teacher and a learner and that understanding is enacted in daily practice. Ultimately the aim of reflective practice is high quality practice and a better experience for families and children. |