

Reflecting on my professional development essay sample

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



As an E105 Student, I will be linking aspects of my work to leadership. I will discuss how the changes I have made have enhanced provision in my role as a full time registered childminder, working from home, looking after 3 to 4 under 5s at any one time. I will be illustrating how I have improved and developed as a leader, improved outcomes for children's care, learning and development, through my investigations of learning outcome PP6 'Leadership and change'. At the beginning of my studies of E105, I filled out a self assessment 'A' stating where I felt my level of experience was for the 7 PP learning outcomes. For PP6 'Leadership and change, I gave, myself a rating of 3, the ratings were between 1 and 4, with 4 being the most experienced. I now feel that I gave myself a better score than what I should have given myself due to the fact, before my studies, I did not entirely understand the difference between management and leadership.

Within my role as a childminder, it is down to me to carry out the management duties, such as printing invoices, letters to parents ensuring everything is in order and set up for the day when children arrive. I originally thought these duties were leadership not management. My learning through E105 block 1 has developed my knowledge in this area. Block 1 (pg24) discusses how others may perceive a home-based carer, 'A home based practitioner may not appear to be in a team or be a leader but may be working with other childminders or early years practitioners. It also discusses, 'As an early years practitioner you will need leadership skills for a host of purposes, decision making, working with parents, other professionals and dealing with conflict'. Through E105 Block 1, the DVD sequence 'Biographies '(The Open University 2013), has inspired me as a leader , as the

practitioners in the DVD clip were all eager to learn new skills and all had positive attitudes to what they wanted to achieve in the future.

This helped me uncover my layer 3 belief, which are beliefs usually hidden, from the 'three layer model' (TLM) block 1 (pg 21). I believe to be a good leader you need to be confident and positive and able to pass these skills onto others, this belief has come from not being very academic or confident at school and never really seeing myself as a leader. My studies as an adult have helped me realise what I can achieve with hard work and determination, which in return has developed my confidence in leadership. In my TMA02 - 'My professional practice: where I am now', I discussed that I sometimes felt, parents or other professionals do not always associate childminder's as leaders, such as when I drop children at nursery, I am not always confident to discuss any issues with them, in my feedback for the TMA02, my tutor asked, 'how does this make you feel'? This helped me to develop my thinking about my practice through stage 1 of the 'Reflective Practice Cycle' (RPC) Block 1 (pg18). I realised by having these thoughts, and being unconfident working with others was not demonstrating good leadership skills.

Through stage 2 'exploring practice' and stage 3 'reflecting on practice' through the (RP) cycle, I have carried out various tasks and investigations. For my investigations in Block 2, I devised a parental questionnaire asking parents 'How well they feel I communicate about their child? All parents answered saying they were happy with my daily diaries and speaking at the end of the day about their child. After reflecting on the comments on my

questionnaires, I felt parents may of been a little bias and that interviews with parents may of enabled me to receive more detailed information, I thought about whether the ways in which I structured my questions in my investigation had made it difficult for parent to give their honest view. Since my investigations I have made time to have separate chats with parents asking them what they think of their child's diary, and a couple of parents said they do not read them as they are not interested in every little toy their child plays with. From this I reflected through stage 3 of the (RPC) and thought how I could I make the children's diaries more interesting, I looked at how I could involve parents and children in information sharing.

I now use sticky labels for the 3 to 5yr old children, which they help me fill in, when they achieve a new stage of development we write it on a label to stick in their sticker books. I ask the children what they have done and if there is anything they would like to add on the sticky label. When parents collect the children I am seeing that they are showing positive learning dispositions, as they are excited to show their parents at collection time their stickers they have received in their books that day and parents take more interest in reading them. I provide blank labels in for parents to fill in about any achievements the children achieve at home. I have found that by involving the children and letting them participate is building their self esteem and they are now asking their parents to write any achievements at home in their books.

I believe this is a positive change as the parents are becoming more involved and the children are building their confidence. My studies of ' The Pen Green

Loop' block 2(pg. 58) which is a model for sharing information between the setting and parent. ' The framework is considered to be a way of planning to meet the needs of children through informed observations this also inspired to develop the way I communicate with parents. Jones and Pound (2010) reader 1 chapter 1, illustrates the importance of responsibilities for leaders, ' Part of all practitioners' responsibility for children's development is they need to work in partnership with parents, both as a leader and practitioner, your role will be to take a lead in this, modelling good practice'.

These are all qualities I am aiming to bring into my setting. Also from my participation in the online tutor group forum ' hat's' activity', I was chairperson this enabled me to demonstrate my leadership skills. As chairperson I encouraged other students to take part. As the activity lasted three weeks, I reminded them which week we were on and which DVD sequence to watch for the next discussion. This activity has developed my confidence as a leader immensely. I am now more confident now when I attend childminding meetings. This was proven when I attended an information evening a couple of weeks ago, regarding the changes regarding the new TAC forms (Team around the child), the forms are to be filled in when a child has additional needs. I felt positive and able to ask questions and put my points across about different scenarios which were provided for us to discuss. Conclusion

From my evidence and my working through E105 shows how I have developed as a leader and how this has impacted in a positive way on the children's learning and development. From what I have learnt, I believe I am

now showing qualities of leadership. Some of these qualities I feel I am now able to demonstrate are illustrated in Block 5 (pg. 177), which according to Reed (2009) are ' processing clear knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, finding ways to reflect on practice and engaging effective partnership working.

Part 2

As an E105 student, I am going to be looking at the developments I have made in my practice as a registered childminder, caring for 3 to 4 children at one time under the age of 5. I will be referring to the ' three layer model' (TLM) block 1. Layer 1 is our everyday actions and routines, Layer 2 is our documentation such as, policies and curriculum guidance and Layer 3 is beliefs that are usually hidden and why we carry out our layer 1 of the (TLM). I will be discussing how working through the ' reflective practice cycle' (RPC), block 1 (pg. 18), has helped me to investigate and reflect on my practice to enable me to make changes. I would like to begin my discussion to talk about the areas I feel I have developed and improved in the most. I have chosen to focus on learning outcome PP1 - Inclusive practices and learning outcome PP3 - supporting children's development and learning. I will be discussing and comparing my self assessment profiles, profile A which I completed at the beginning of my E105 studies and profile B which I filled in for my last Tutor marked assignment.

When completing the profiles I gave myself marks out of 4 for how confident I felt in each PP learning outcomes. For self assessment profile A, I gave myself a score of 3 for PP1 which shows that I felt confident in this area at

the start of my studies. I now feel that I judged myself in this area too high, as at the time, I had never read or analysed the relevant legislation or documents which relates to my setting. ' A summary of the rights under the Convention the rights of the Child' (UNCRC), United Nations (1989,) being one of them. I analysed the documents in block 4, by asking purposeful questions as illustrated in block 4 (pg 128). I chose this method as I often forget what I have read, by asking questions I was able to gain the information I needed. I have placed a copy of this evidence in my practice evidence file (PEF).

I also highlighted important points in documents, one point I highlighted as being an important point on inclusion and how I feel I have begun to develop as an inclusive practitioner is ' Pre - Birth to three' (pg 20)(Scotland org. uk early years) which states, ' Inclusion and responsive care are crucial if children's rights are to be promoted effectively. Through working closely with parents and other professionals, staff in early years settings recognise that all those involved with children and families have an important contribution to make'. When I first started my studies, my layer 3 belief (TLM) was that it was down to adults to make choices for young children and that they were not really capable of making their own decisions. This belief comes from me being a shy child and adults always making the decisions for me. After watching the DVD sequence, ' Chatter matter' (The Open University 2013), the clip showed how even babies can make a choice between two musical instruments.

Through my analysis of current legislation and watching the DVD sequence my layer 3 beliefs (TLM) have altered. I now believe children have a right to express their views and to make choices. I now incorporate choices into my planning for the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) (Department of Education (2012), taking my layer 3 belief to Layer 2 of the (TLM). I now allow children to make more choices by choosing which book they want me read or which musical instrument they want and let the preschoolers become involved in setting out the environment to give them a sense of feeling included. The (EYFS) states ‘ children have the right to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion. The (UNCRC) Article 12 also illustrates this, ‘ Respect the views of the child’ and Article 13 ‘ freedom of expression’. By providing the children with choices, I have taken my Layer 3 beliefs into Layer 1 of the (TLM).

For learning outcome PP3, I gave myself a score of 2, as I did not feel as confident in this area. This was down to me feeling that I could not provide the same learning environment as other settings because I work alone from home. I chose PP3 as I feel I have made positive developments in this area to ensure I am supporting children’s learning and development. Through My work of block 3, ‘ promoting children’s play, learning and development’, Through stage 1 and 2 of the (RP) cycle, I thought about and explored how well I provide play opportunities for imaginary play, indoors and outdoors for children? After watching the DVD sequence ‘ painting outside’ (The Open University 2012), I reflected on how I would have interacted with the children

compared to the childminder in the sequence. The childminder in the DVD clip, took a back seat and let the children play use the painting activity as they wished. I thought about whether; I let children initiate their own play? I carried out five observations over three days the children were aged 4, 3 and 2. I decided to be a participant observer as illustrated in block 3 (pg45), 'Gold's participant roles.

This method enabled me to observe and participate slightly in their play. My observations and evaluations have been placed in my (pef) file. I reflected on my observations through stage 3 of the (RP) cycle, I noted in my reflective journal, that the children were able to initiate their own role play from many resources that were available to them. This illustrated to me that they were learning through Piaget's theory that ' children's abilities as developing towards those of adults through a regular series of stages' E100 study topic 4 (pg. 85). The children in my care were in the ' preoperational stage, in this stage children's thinking become integrated with the activity they engage, in as they begin to use symbols. In pretend play for example a wooden block becomes a toy car as it's pushed along the floor'.

Through stage 4 of the RP cycle, I evaluated my observations and decided that the children are able to make different uses of many resources, inside and outside to develop their imaginative play. I thought about how I could use the role play areas to develop the children's learning further as to cover more of the curriculum. I decided to provide signs with words and pictures, menus and brochures in the role play areas to develop literacy,

mathematical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. I have also provided the children with calculators, tape measures, printed numbers to use in different play as they wish. I feel I have now provided the children with a more enabling environment which is one of the four themes in the EYFS (2012). Conclusion

I have given myself a rating of 3 for profile B in both areas in both areas. I feel I have developed my knowledge, skills and expertise relating to the learning outcome PP1 and PP3. The changes I have made have had a positive impact on the children, they show positive learning disposition, by being actively involved, the children point out the pictures and words in the role play area, they show excitement as they are developing good self-esteem through making their own choices. Anning and Edwards, reader 2(chapter 1), suggest that adults should at the very least create environments that are 'affording, i. e. provide opportunities for children's active engagement'. By introducing natural products and real foods in the role play area for children to explore they are gaining knowledge and understanding of the world. Block 3 (pg21), the constructivist theory illustrates 'knowledge cannot simply be transferred, because learning involves the individual learner in actively constructing their understanding'.

Part 3

For this part I will discuss, how I would like to develop as a practitioner and the steps I will be taking to achieve my goals. I will highlight my short term goals, which are small changes I will be making immediately, my medium term goals that I will be aiming to achieve in the next three to six

months and my long term goals which I hope to achieve in the future. My short term goals are to ensure, I change role play area round on a regular basis to keep it interesting for the children, as it is stated in the EYFS 2012(pg 46) ' support children's excursions into imaginary worlds by encouraging inventiveness, offering support and advice on occasions and ensuring that they have experiences that stimulate their interest'. I now want to ensure I analyse all my policies and documents, which I use my setting to ensure I am promoting inclusion. I am also aiming to carry out better procedures when parents first visit my setting, by going through each of my policies and legislation with them to ensure they understand all my documentation and ask for their opinions as to make them feel included. From my studies of E105, I will also reflect on what I do and why I do it to ensure I am meeting best practice at all times.

I want to start collecting objects to promote heuristic play as illustrated by Holland, reader 1, (chapter 10) which suggests collecting items such as ' empty tins, , woollen pom-poms, wooden clothes pegs, metal curtain rings, wooden clothes pegs and ping pong balls. Heuristic play will give the children opportunities explore these items to find out how they work and feel. My medium term goal is to improve my leadership skills further with working in partnership with parents' I need to provide them with opportunities to be involved in the planning of their child. I still need to develop my confidence in communicating with parents.

I will invite them to have one to one interviews with me every 3 months, so we can discuss any issues and encourage shy parents to become involved in

their children's learning. I will also ask them for their opinions on how they wish to communicate and how they feel their child is progressing. I want to ensure I make them feel included by having their thoughts and opinions listened to. My long term goals are to complete my foundation degree as I have 2 more modules left to complete this will take me two years. I will hopefully then do a third year to gain a BA Honours degree in early years. I also aim to expand my setting by having my garage made into another playroom for the children, so that I can provide more areas for learning in my provision and take on an assistant, to enable me to provide a positive learning environment for children in my care.

References

Anning A and Edwards A (2010)(eds) ' Young children as learners' Supporting children's learning in the Early years, 2nd edition, Oxon, David Fulton/Milton Keynes, The Open University. Crisp M, Devereux J, Dowson P, Jones C, Matinetto D, Mckeough S, Pound L, Reed M and Stacy M, (2010) Study Topic 4, E100 the early years developing practice, Milton Keynes. Department for Education (2012) Statutory Framework for the Early years Foundation Stage, London, Crown Copyright Goodliff G, Mckeough S, Paigis Z and Reed M. (2010) Block 1, E105 Professional practice in the early years, Being a reflective practitioner, Milton Keynes. Goodliffe G, Mckeough S, Paigis Z and Reed M. (2010) Block 2, E105 Professional practice in the early years, Thinking about practice. Milton Keynes Goodliff G, Mckeough S, Paigis Z and Reed M. (2010) Block 3, E105 Professional practice in the early years, Exploring Practice. Milton Keynes. Goodliff G, Mckeough S, Paigis Z and Reed

M. (2010) Block 4, E105 Professional practice in the early years, Exploring Practice. Milton Keynes. Goodliffe G, Mckeough S, Paigis Z and Reed M. (2010) Block 5, E105 Professional practice in the early years, Reflecting on your practice. Milton Keynes Holland R (2010) (ed) 'What's it all about?' - how introducing heuristic play has affected provision for the under-threes in one day nursery. Working with Children in the Early Years, 2nd Edition, Oxon, David Fulton/Milton Keynes, The Open University. Jones C and Linda Pound(2010)(eds) 'The roles and responsibilities of leaders' Working with Children in the Early Years, 2nd Edition, Oxon, David Fulton/Milton Keynes, The Open University. The Open University (2010), E105 Professional Practice in the early years, DVD 2, 'Milton Keynes 'Biographies' The Open University. The Open University (2010), E105 Professional Practice in the early years, DVD 2, 'Milton Keynes 'Chatter Matters' The Open University. The Open University (2010), E105 Professional Practice in the early years, DVD 2, 'Milton Keyne 'Painting Outside' The Open University.

Pre-Birth to three (2010) [online] www.educationscotland.gov.uk United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child [online] Available at www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf