

A self review and
needs analysis of the
students existing
knowledge and skills
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[Profession](#), [Student](#)



In order to carry out this assignment, I will begin by reflecting on my own practice and performance. I have developed an action plan, depicting five areas where I believe my practice could be improved through a strengthening of my skills and knowledge. I aimed to discover my strengths and weaknesses by completing a training needs analysis, based on the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) 2013.

This helped me to identify which areas of my practice I have chosen to focus on in relation to the benchmark, i. e. the Common Core competencies. The first standard I have chosen to address is, ' 2. 1 Be more accountable for children's progress, attainment and outcomes' (NCTL, 2013: 2), which I hope to achieve by November 2013. In order to help a child develop, we must begin by observing a child, assess their level of development and plan for them based on their interests.

When observing a child we must ensure that we are recording the observations appropriately, basing them on evidence and not opinion as is stated in the Common Core competencies (CC) (CWCD, 2010: 10) Good observations further enable us to create a strong foundation to plan relevant activities for children. Once this has been completed, it is extremely important to reflect on what we have done.

Reflection is integral to improving a child's progress, attainment and outcomes and provides us with the opportunity to assess the results of an activity, so we can plan appropriate next steps or adapt the activity to make it more appropriate to a child's needs and abilities. I am confident in my ability to design exciting and relevant activities for the children in my care,

but have chosen to focus on improving my ability to constructively reflect on these activities, to ensure the next steps can have the best possible learning opportunities for the child.

This is why I want to devise an improved planning system whereby staff can, ' Draw upon personal experiences and other people's perspectives, to help you reflect, challenge your thinking and to assess the impact of your actions. ' (CWCD, 2010: 12) A richer evaluation from an activity will give us a stronger basis to provide next steps, which are more focused and relevant to the unique child. I intend to research evaluation techniques so I will, ' know how to use theory and experience to reflect upon, think about and improve practice.' (CWCD, 2010: 12)

Prompts for evaluation should also be provided to ensure we are reflecting effectively on our activities, rather than just writing something irrelevant in an effort to ' just fill the box'. In addition, I think it would be beneficial to display ideas of activities and possible questions around the room in relevant areas to help extend spontaneous play. As the majority of our planning is spontaneous, due to the fickle and fleeting interests of a child, we must plan daily to provide activities true to a child's most current interest.

This in turn will provide us with the richer observations we require to design fulfilling activities, unique to each child. The next target I have set myself, which is to be completed by December 2013 is, ' 8. 5 Take responsibility for leading practice through appropriate professional development for self and colleagues. ' (NCTL, 2013: 5) It is extremely important to frequently attend

courses related to childcare as new research and theories are published on a regular basis, which change our view on the way we care for children.

While in an ideal world, every practitioner would be supplied with unlimited time and funding to attend every course, this is not the reality and we therefore must ensure that we relay information from each of the courses we do attend to the rest of the staff in our setting in order to enhance the practice of the setting as a whole rather than just one practitioner. Currently, this is achieved through filling out a 'course feedback form' which is one A4 page to squeeze in all the knowledge you have gained from the attended course.

This is not very effective as the forms are not sufficient to encompass the wealth of information obtained on the course. In addition, the forms are kept away in a folder in the office, which is not very accessible to staff, so the benefits are not widely disseminated. The common core competencies state that I should, 'have the confidence to challenge the way you or others practice.' (CWDC, 2010: 14) In my workplace, this means when I identify an area that needs improving, I would be enabled to attend a relevant course to ensure all staff are consistent and up to date with correct practice.

When relaying the course I must, 'communicate effectively with other practitioners and professionals by listening to them and ensuring that you are being listened to.' (CWDC, 2010: 19) Providing carefully designed aids to appeal to all types of learners i. e. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic, such as: power-point presentations, speeches or role play activities will ensure that

the new information is thoroughly absorbed by all staff regardless of aptitude.

I will, ' be proactive, initiate necessary action and be able to put forward your judgements' by creating easy to read hand-outs or leaflets. These would be available for staff to refer to, as well as for parents/carers who attend the setting to access, so we can enable consistency between home life and nursery life for the children in our care. Another aspect of my practice I have chosen to focus on is, ' 5.

5 know when a child is in need of additional support, and how this can be accessed, working in partnership with parents and/or carers and other professionals. ' (NCTL, 2013: 4) This process began when I was reviewing summative assessments and overviews, and became aware that a child in my care was not achieving the expected level of development in all areas. It is important that I, ' know what to do in given cases - for example, referrals... raising concerns when a child... is not achieving their potential.' (CWDC, 2010: 20)

We know it is essential to raise any concerns with parents/carers in an appropriate manner first to ensure a good partnership throughout the process, because it states, ' know when and how to discuss concerns with parents and carers' (CWDC, 2010: 15) in the common core competencies. I know from completing my childcare qualifications what the correct course of action is, however I have not had much experience in referring children or filling out CAF forms, so I thought this could be a good opportunity to expand my own knowledge in this area, thus improving my practice.

I intend to assist in the filling out of a CAF form as part of the referral process so I can gain a greater understanding in knowing, ' when and how to obtain information, advice and support for children... their parents and carers, and when and how to report concerns. ' (CWDC, 2010: 12) To develop my knowledge of the further stages of the referral process, I will continue to be involved in any meetings/conferences concerning the child. This will involve liaising with other professionals, helping me to, ' understand the procedures, objectives, roles and relationships of partner services, in order to work effectively alongside them.' (CWDC, 2010: 21)

Throughout this process with reference to both the internal and external elements of the referral, it is important to be fully aware of ' organisational procedures and legal frameworks... within your own organisation and other agencies' (CWDC, 2010: 17) to ensure a successful and beneficial outcome for the child and family involved in the referral process. By being fully involved in this procedure from the outset, I hope to gain the knowledge and experience to be able to initiate and complete similar referrals in the future.

I have set a date of February 2014 to complete this target by, however depending on the outcome of the CAF form or referral, this could be altered. The fourth action on my target plan is, ' 3. 5 demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate strategies in the early teaching of mathematics. ' (NCTL, 2013: 3) I hope to have achieved this by April 2014. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) tells us that the maths area, ' includes essential skills and knowledge for children to participate in society' (EYFS reference here), so it is of vital importance to ensure that we, as practitioners, have the

maths skills necessary to help children achieve their full potential in this area.

However, this is an area that is often neglected within settings, and it has recently come to light that it is also an area that generally children are under achieving in. To combat this, the government have launched the ' maths champions' project which is to be led by the Early Years Professionals (EYP) within the setting. The project aims to boost the practitioners' skills in mathematics and their confidence in this area in an attempt to increase the mathematic ability of the children in our care.

The first stage of this is to complete an audit to assess my confidence in mathematics as well as to assess the content of the maths resources in the setting. The second stage is to complete an initial assessment, asking you maths questions, which will convert your score into a level ranging from ' entry level 1' to ' level 3' From this, data can be collected and evaluated to decide on the best course of action to improve our mathematic ability and finally take a diagnostic test similar to the initial assessment to assess what improvements, if any, have been made.

I believe it is important to take part in this project because the common core competencies state that I should, ' make good use of available information, appraising its content and assessing what else might be needed' (CWDC, 2010: 22) I am excited to see the outcome of this project, how it affects the way in which we teach maths through play and what knock on effects it may have on children in other areas of development, as we know all learning is holistic and interlinked.

Lastly, I aim to, ' 2. 3 know and understand attachment theories, their significance and how effectively to promote secure attachments. ' (NCTL, 2013: 2) I have given myself until the end of the first year of my foundation degree, June 2014, to do this as we will look at different theories in more and more depth as the course goes on and I will be able to provide thorough evaluation of them all.

I currently work in the baby room and so I am perfectly placed to implement my developing knowledge of attachment theories when new babies enter the setting and transition into nursery life, and time spent away from the main caregivers. This can often be a traumatic experience for such young children, and by gaining underpinning knowledge of attachment theories, I intend to ease the transition to make it as pleasant an experience as possible for both children and their parents/carers.

It is essential to, ' understand the different ways in which babies and children form attachments and how these might change' (CWDC, 2010: 12) I have very little experience working in a baby room, so I am keen to expand my knowledge of child development for this vital age where such intense learning takes place, and understanding, ' the importance of forming positive relationships in the development of children... and how this can be supported.' (CWDC, 2010: 12)

When supporting transitions, it is essential to, ' communicate straightforward, reassuring messages about key transitions' (CWDC, 2010: 17) in an attempt to put parents/carers' minds at ease as children can pick up on hesitant and unsure body language and feelings towards the situation.

This will only make it more difficult for children to transition smoothly, aggravating what can already be a distressing event.

One of my strengths is how I form strong and lasting relationships with parents/carers as well as their sons or daughters, I continue to keep in touch with many of the children who have left the settings as I offer my services as a babysitter for parents/carers who do not have anyone to look after their children when they go out.

I must 'reassure children... their families, and carers by explaining what is happening, by involving them in decisions as appropriate, and by exploring possible actions to deal with new and challenging situations.' (CWDC, 2010: 17) Possible actions could be experimenting with strategies influenced by child attachment theories and inform new ways to promote secure attachments.

Reflection and evaluation are integral to your practice when you work in an early years setting, we must strive to constantly improve our practice to better the outcomes for the children within our care. I have identified my strengths and weaknesses, and in completing the program I have outlined above, I intend to enhance my performance in all areas. In relation to the target dates I have set myself, I will write up a concise evaluation to confirm whether I have achieved the desired outcomes of the 5 targets or not.