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# Literacy in the Early Years

## *Reflective Practice*

Issue 7

EARLY LITERACY E-BULLETIN

Your Early Literacy Specialist can support reflective practices.

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### What is reflective practice?

**Reflective practice** is a continuous process of observation, reflection, and self-analysis of both teaching practices and interactions with children and families, as well as colleagues, to discover what drives children’s learning and how teachers’ values impact children’s development.

Reflective practice has its roots in the work of John Dewey who, in 1933, wrote about the distinction between “routine action” (action driven by habit and routine) and “reflective action” (action given careful consideration and justification). Dewey believed reflective action was critical to the development of professional practice.

Through this ongoing process of observation, discussion and analysis, and modification of teaching practices, educators increase their ability to support children’s confidence, self-regulation, and learning. Confidence, self-regulation, and desire to learn underpin children’s acquisition of emergent literacy skills.

### Resources for Reflective Practices

### Discussion questions *for communities of practices, staff meetings or individual reflections*

In this 4 page article entitled [Becoming a Reflective Teacher](#) Margie Carter, Deb Curtis and Debbie Lebo describe reflective teaching practices and suggest how to use a “thinking lens”.

“Reflection can be seen as a responsibility, but it can also be viewed as a right of early childhood teachers.” What do you think of this statement?  
Consider the Thinking Lens on page 4. Is this Thinking Lens valuable to your practice?

Reflection begins with observation. Short videos from early learning centres coupled with reflection topics can be great starting places for engaging in reflective practices.

[Connecting with Practice](#) offers reflections about this story reading vignette.

This [3 1/2 minute story reading vignette](#) shows an Australian educator reading to three young children in her care.

Were some or all of four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* (belonging, engagement, well-being, expression) supported in this story reading practice? How?

Karen Callaghan explores the role of time in early learning programs and classrooms in this [3 1/2 minute Think Feel Act video](#)

1. What assumptions do we have about the use of time in our programs?
2. What values underlie our assumptions?
3. How can assumptions and values impact children’s learning and development?

## LITERACY IN THE EARLY YEARS

Created by  
Early Literacy Specialists  
Kingston Literacy & Skills  
www.klandskills.ca

*We believe that early  
learning professionals  
who learn and grow  
in their practice help  
children learn and  
grow too.*

South East  
Early Literacy Specialists

### Recommended Resources

[Communities of practice for professional development](#) by Margie Carter (5 page article)

[A Thinking Lens® for Reflection and Inquiry](#) (Bilingual handout)

[Reflecting in Communities of Practice](#) by Deb Curtis  
(Book includes 10 group study sessions to understand and practice the key elements of reflective practice)

[Learning Together with Young Children: A Curriculum Framework for Reflective Teachers](#) by Deb Curtis and Margie Carter  
(Book includes classroom stories and photos to illustrate the concepts)

[Working in the Reggio Way](#) by Julianne P. Wurm  
(Book includes interactive activities for individual or group reflection to help early learning educators adapt the inspiring concepts of Reggio Emilia into North American programs)

[How Does Learning Happen?](#) Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years  
(Document includes reflective questions for educators about children, families, community and educators in their practice)

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[The Hundred Languages of Children](#)  
by Loris Malaguzzi (founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach)



....the inspiration behind reflective practices  
in early learning programs