

Personal Development Plan

Name: Gemma Williams Student Number: 2312455 Module Code: ECEY4009/C 530 words

SPECIFIC	RELEVANT	ACHEIVABLE	RESOURCES	TARGET DATE	MEASURABLE
Improve level of Information Communication and Technology to support children and myself in school. To be able to plan confidently incorporating cross curricular Digital Competence Framework skills in the 6 Area's of Learning and Experience.	Although I am confident with using some ICT such as 'Word' and 'PowerPoint' there are many applications and programs I am unsure of. With the new Digital Competence Framework coming into force alongside the new curriculum in Wales I need to see what I am able to teach confidently.	• Course booked for ICT in progression step 1. • Good base of knowledge of some applications and systems	• The new curriculum in Wales - 6 Areas of learning experiences • Competency test to show areas that I am less confident in • Trinity Saint David DigiCentre resources • Planning and preparation of lessons	• End of school year 2024 • Reviewed yearly with new apps and technology	I can confidently teach ICT and Digital Competence Framework across the curriculum.
To improve Welsh oracy in school	OFSTED inspection recommendations (28/09/23)	• Attitudes towards the Welsh language due to being on	• EAS Welsh in English medium settings advisors.	• End of Autumn Term 2023	Through targets and observations from the learning walks. Listening to learners.

	We have applied for the silver Cymreag Campus award I am the Welsh coordinator for Progression Step 1/2 (Foundation Phase - Year 4) in my school and I teach the Welsh across the years.	the border of England. • Staff's workload and commitments to other subjects • Professional Learning may be needed by staff to improve their skills	• Teachers in School to make sure daily Welsh/Helpwr Heddiw role are being completed and shown in planning. • Liaise with other Welsh coordinators from other schools	• Reviewed at the end of every term.	Looking at teachers planning for evidence.
Improve physical and mental health	To eat healthier. To keep fit and lose weight. To focus on my own well-being.	• Time restrictions • Will Power • Cost • Work and university workload • Family commitments	• Family • Friends • Fitness Classes	On going Target weight goal set for a holiday in July	When I feel better in myself Less migraines Fitter Weight loss
Student Representative Role	This is a new role that I do not know anything about. I want to make sure that I represent the students on the	I have good communication skills so I feel that this is a role that will enable me to support the students on my course.	• University lecturers • Other students in role • Research on role	End of academic year	If I can help other students or anyone else in my situation.

	course in the best way.				
Complete BA Early Years Education and Care	Started course September 2023. I need a degree so I can achieve my goal of becoming a teacher.	I am fully committed to gaining this qualification. Hard work and perseverance will help me to achieve this	• University Lecturers • Friends and family with childcare commitments	Summer 2025	Completion of BA Early Years Education and Care
Become a qualified teacher	Start Post Graduate Certificate in Education	I have been 'teaching' full time for over 5 years as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant.	• My current workplace • University Lecturers • Mentor	September 2025 - July 2026	Completion of PGCE

Part 2 - Reflection

Name: Gemma Williams Student Number: 2312455 Module Code: ECEY4009/C 1038words

What is reflection and reflective practise?

Let us begin by considering what it is to be reflective; to be reflective you must be able to observe and assess what you are doing and take actions to improve and challenge the learning process. Reflection is to think deeply and to focus on a subject or an experience. Beaney (Brock 2014, pp. 8) believes that 'Reflection encourages deeper understanding of actions... that can lead to improvement in professional practice'. To be reflective in practise is the ability to consider and analyse not just negative problems but the positives too, during or after an activity or action; what was done well, what needs to change. It also gives the professional a way forward to act on issues. Biggs (1999, pp. 6) maintains that 'reflection in professional practice, however, gives back not what it is, but what might be, an improvement on the original'. Schön believes that to be reflective you have to get down to the 'swampy lowlands', by this he means that you need to be in these life experiences and learn, from making mistakes, it is only then that we learn to plan and move onwards. From being in these 'swampy lowlands' and then reflecting afterwards was the only way to have a real insight of what is happening and ways to improve.

Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

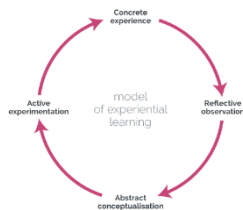
Reflective practise is an important skill to have when working within the Early Years, with the new requirements; for example, the new Welsh Curriculum coming into force, practitioners must be able to adapt and work in different ways. Edwards remarks that (Brock 2014, pp 9) 'These changes require reflection so that we can all focus on what is working, adapt what isn't and continue to grow and improve teaching and learning experiences for children.' Being reflective enables the professional to look deeper into their setting/activity and to improve and challenge ideas. The practitioner must be able to be open minded and to be able to recognise their strengths and to evaluate what they need to improve and develop. The practitioner needs to use reflection to be able to think about ways that they can improve their practise so that it has the best impact of the lives of the children in their care. The practitioner should be reflective when planning how to develop and further their practice. Reflection is important in an Early Years setting to enable the children to have real life authentic learning and they can start to reflect on their learning, the practitioner needs to model reflection by asking questions to upskill the child's thoughts and develop different skills. It is important to be reflective with colleagues as this is a good way to help others who may not have much experience and to share good practice with others to develop the children's need and also staff's development. Being reflective in practice can enable the practitioner to put into place strategies and other tools that will help to explore other activities and authentic experiences for the children. It can aid conversations and challenge beliefs that one may find difficult to communicate with others.

The theory of reflective practise:

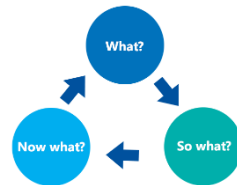
'Reflection is not a new activity; in fact you can trace it back to the Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato and Aristotle – whose philosophic debate was founded on critical thought and reflection.' (University of Edinburgh, 2020).

John Dewey and Schön were the first to investigate reflection and practise. Dewey's process was a reflective model that showed the importance of children having a voice when it came to learning through reflection and experience. Dewey's model even though it was over a century ago is still relevant with the new Curriculum in Wales, where the children should be given the opportunity to have real life experiences through authentic learning, John Dewey (1933) 'We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.' Schön's reflective model observed 'reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.' (Reflective practice. IRISS) Reflective practitioner Schön believed that reflection-in-action meant reflecting on the spot, which improved the quality and creativity as well as being able to make decisions and being able to find alternative ways to improve practise. Reflection-on-action meant that the practitioner reflected on an experience after the activity has taken place, what and why they did what they did and ways to improve practise.

Kolb's Reflective Model (1984)



Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper 'What' Model (2001)

**Analysis of models** – compare/contrast/pros/cons:

When comparing these two models above we can conclude that these models can be said to be similar as they both offer a path for practitioners to use these models to reflect on practise, they both use their models in circular which means that they continue and reoccur. One can observe that both reflective models have steps that the practitioner should follow to be reflective, Kolb having 4 stages and Rolfe et al. having 3 stages. That being said sometimes having these stages may not fit into the experience and they can be time consuming to follow each step.

Rolfe et al. framework gets the practitioner to be reflective after the experience has happened, Rolfe was said to have thought that it was 'crucial to engage in reflection after an event and concentrate on examining the present moment' (Academic Expert UK), this enables the practitioner to reflect fully and see in depth the learning experience. Whereas Kolb's reflective model supports reflection when the learner is having hands on experience and looks at in the moment reflection where the practitioner can stop and make on the spot decisions. Kolb's view was taken from looking into theories on how children learn and then to use reflection as a way to further and develop the experience as it happens and then using research and planning after the experience. One can note that Rolfe's model is simple and straightforward to use as it only has 3 key questions that needs to be considered after the experience however Kolb's model can be seen as more challenging due to the steps one should take during and after the experience.

Kolb's model has an extra step 'active experiment' in his reflective journey that emphasises the practitioner to use what they have learnt from the reflection and further the future experience by research and planning.

Conclusion

All of this points to the conclusion that reflection is important as it allows us to see and plan what we have but it should not be used as a tool to think about what has happened and the reasons why; but as a tool to further and develop an experience. 'This helps us to identify what went really well so we can keep doing it, what didn't go so well and if there is anything you would do differently in future.' (University of Hull, 2023)

It is important to summarise that, Brock. A. (2014, pp. 8) 'Reflective practice should therefore be continual and ongoing, a real part of life and not just an abstract or temporal exercise' and a skill that professionals need to do to improve their practise and to make a deeper impact on children's learning. It is also important to add that 'Reflective practise is a requirement of the Early Years Teacher's Standards 4.5 and 8.6' (Teresa Wilson 2016)

Wilson (2016) suggests that when you are reflective it can lead you to be able to see clearly and to look for ways to develop and be aware of your abilities and with the curriculum and the world ever changing being reflective is a way to adapt, develop and further learning.

Being reflective in practice is a great way for the practitioner to review what they do well and ways to see what they need to develop, personally and professionally.

Part 2 - REFERENCES

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Part 3 - Understanding the significance of professional practise to meeting the needs of children.

1777 words

Gaspar M (Professional Practice. 2015) states that a professional is someone who has a 'qualification or specific expertise', Research by Gate (2019, cited Perez R) backs up this statement by adding that a professional has 'unique skills, knowledge, and ethical standards that guide them in what knowledge and responsibilities are required and how to execute what has been learned.'

To be professional is to have certain values that are required to be successful in that area of expertise, for example an Early Years practitioner needs to have certain values such as liking children, having the best interest of the children. These values are an attitude that one does not get from a qualification; it is a personal value. A professional has a certain qualification and experience to work in that area of expertise.

The professional working within the Early Years needs to have a good understanding of ethical views and to be aware of the different cultures and values of other people who they work with and to respect this also.

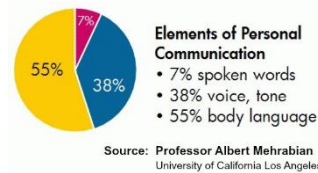
They need to know how children develop, grow and learn and they should progress this knowledge through professional development. The practitioner needs to know the guidelines, frameworks and the legalisations, such as National Minimum Standards, Curriculum for Wales, Care Inspectorate and Estyn, Children's Acts all of these are the foundations that professional have to abide by. The practitioner also needs to be trustworthy and committed to enhancing and developing the children's needs, this helps by being a team player and being able to work together to share ideas, skills and experience.

Having effective communication skills and a strong trusting relationship is essential when it comes to safeguarding.

An early year's practitioner needs to have effective communication skills, not only with the children in their care but with other adults too. Early year's practitioners work alongside other professionals and with multi-agency organisations, they need to be able to

communicate effectively to create a professional partnership, this will enable these professionals to best cater for the needs of children in their care.

Early Years Practitioners must be able to communicate with the children in their care 'Effective communication involves listening, understanding and responding to people' (City and



Guilds, 2019). This image shows that communication isn't just about the spoken voice which is only 7%. The data from the image shows that the most effective communication skill is the use of body

language such as smiles, touch and movements. Early Years Practitioners have to have the skill of being able to actively listen to children when they are speaking. Article 12 and 13 of the United Nations of the Rights of a Child advocates that children have the right to 'express his or her views in all matters, and the right to freedom of expression. This includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.' (Research in practise, 2014).

Practitioners need to be able to adjust their communication method when speaking to different people; for instance, when speaking to a child they should speak to the child on their level, and respect the child's disabilities or cultural differences. The practitioner should be aware of their tone of voice and the way they speak to other adults. 'Effective communication builds understanding and trust. When you and parents or carers understand and trust each other, you'll all be better able to work together to support children's wellbeing and development.' (RaisingChildren.net.au. 2021)

Having effective communication skills enables the practitioner to build important relationships with the children and families in their care, this is a requirement set by the Early Years Teacher's Standards - standard 5.5, 6.2 and 6.3. Building an effective trusting relationship with parents is important for families as they can ask and receive support and advice from professionals who have knowledge and experience.

With the curriculum ever changing and new legislations, practitioners need to have in-depth knowledge of their professional practice. The new curriculum for Wales (which is now

statutory in Wales since September 2022) is an example of a new way that practitioners work within the Early years setting. The practitioner must have the best interests of the child and make sure that experiences are authentic and follow the children's interests. They must have the ability to change activities if a new teachable moment happens, and be able to plan in the moment. It is the professional's role to understand how children learn and to facilitate learning through fun and engaging activities.

The practitioner needs to understand how children learn and to increase their knowledge by developing their skills, this does not have to be in form of a certificate as sometimes shadowing someone or researching a topic will create a new skill.

The Early Year's Practitioner must know the value of confidentiality within her role and the importance of safeguarding and child protection. Safeguarding is the way we protect children from different types of abuse neglect and harm. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [hereafter NSPCC] charity say that 'Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm'. Practitioners need to keep detailed reports which they may need to share with outside agencies. These documents need to adhere to General Data Protection Regulation [hereafter GDPR] to make sure that personal data is protected. It is important that the practitioner knows that everyone is responsible for protecting and reporting any issues.

The practitioner needs to know and understand the signs, policies and procedures of safeguarding children and they need to know who to report issues or concerns or where they can go if they need help or advice, for example; the safeguarding application for Wales that can be downloaded or the safeguarding officer in their practice. Regarding safeguarding the practitioner needs to be aware of the legislations that are in Wales concerning children's welfare. The 1989 Children's Act, 2004 Children's Act, United Nations Convention on the Rights of a child [hereafter UNCRC], are just some of the legislations that underpin how we safeguard children. Article 42 of the UNCRC say that adults need to make children aware of their rights and that all practitioners have to be aware and trained in safeguarding. 'The

state must make sure adults and children know about the principles and provisions of the UNCRC' (Save the children, no date).

The Government states that 'Working in partnership with parents and carers is central to the early years foundation stage' (GOV.UK no date). Working in partnership with parents and carers helps to build a trusting relationship. This is important as if parents have any issues or concerns about their child, then having a good relationship will make them feel that they can seek advice and support. Sharing information such as a report or pictures will encourage the parent to be involved within the practice.

Professionals not only work alongside parents and carers they work with other multi-agencies such as speech therapists, social workers, occupational therapists and many more.

The NSPCC says that 'Multi-agency working is key to effective safeguarding and child protection' (Sidebotham et al, 2016). It is imperative that practitioners work together to make sure that nothing is missed, professionals must liaise, share documents that give an overall view of the child and their development and work collaboratively for further support.

Working with other agencies is a great way to share knowledge and expertise that they can develop their own skills and put into their practice. There can be challenges when working with people outside of your practice such as communication skills. Not everyone uses the same form of communication and people have other commitments, this could mean a delay in matters arising.

Working alongside other professionals enables the practitioner to share knowledge and expertise which will help to achieve the best results for the children.

Birth to 5 matters (2021) recognises the importance of observation in the Early Years, 'Observation of children is a fundamental professional skill, used in everyday practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage'. The Oxford English dictionary (2023) define the word 'observe' as a way 'to take notice of, be conscious of; to notice, perceive, see/ and to make 'a verbal observation, a remark.' In the Early Years settings practitioners observe children in

play to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children. Practitioners use observation to see how the children are behaving, how they are developing, looking at interests and also as a way to see if the resources and environment is best suited for the children's needs.

'It is essential that practitioners working with children have an understanding of child development and the needs of children'. The Welsh Assembly Government document (2020) 'The Learning Country' states that observation is a way to do this. Observation is important to understand where the children need to go next in their development journey; you observe to plan the next steps. This can be done through reflection; Schon, a theorist in reflection, believed that reflection-in-action was a good way to reflect on an experience, this can be done through observing what is taking place.

The observation and planning cycle are stages that a professional must follow to know what to do. You must first observe the child. Observation is a great way to observe an individual child and then be able to assess and plan for each child's needs.

Practitioners plan from what they have observed and use pupil voice. Pupil voice is an important way to involve the children's ideas and interests. Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) states that children have the right to have opinions and to be taken seriously. Practitioners must be able to listen through observing to achieve this.

There are 3 stages of planning; 'long term' where practitioners must consider the result of a topic using all frameworks and the principles of the Early Years curriculum. 'Medium term' planning will focus on authentic experiences, resources and key questions for learning. 'Short term' planning focus' on the learning objectives, differentiation and assessment for learning.

After observing, practitioners assess the children's developmental progress, strengths, and areas that require further attention. Assessment tools and frameworks, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage [hereafter EYFS] in the UK, are often used to evaluate children's learning and development. This assessment helps identify any gaps or concerns in children's development.

The practitioner must be familiar with The United Nation Convention on the Rights of a Child, 'The UNCRC' is a legally binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.' Save the Children (no date). There are 54 articles that meets the basic needs of children which will enable the child to meet their full potential. The UNRC was written by Eglantyne Jebb, in 1923. There are 196 countries that have signed up to meet the needs of children, America being one country that has not signed up.

These articles are fundamental and underpin the healthy development of children, they are therefore crucial to the future wellbeing of children and society as a whole.

In conclusion, to be a professional Early Years Practitioner you must have certain personal values to be a professional such as; an enjoyment of working with children and having the best interests of the child.

The practitioner needs to have effective communication skills and by having these skills it will enable the practitioner to build important relationships with not only the child but with co-workers, parents and other professionals. Nursery Resources (2019) note that 'Parent's have the right to play a central role in making decisions about their child's education and care and their partnerships are key to a successful early years experience'.

The practitioner needs to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of different frameworks, legislations and the policies and procedures that underpin children's lifelong learning.

Safeguarding and understanding how to protect children is an important part of a practitioner's role. The Early Years Alliance (no date) backs up this statement by stating, 'it is important you comply to safeguarding measures to ensure the wellbeing of all the children at your setting'.

The practitioner needs to understand the principles and the importance of the UNCRC and how these articles encompass everything that protects and teaches the child.

Part 3 - References

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