

Cover Page

For this assignment I have submitted the following –

Component 1: Reflective Personal Development Plan (PDP)

Component 2: Briefing Paper

Component 3: Essay: Professional Practice

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?
Epi pen First Aid Trained	I know that I have achieved this goal as I will have confidence in administering the medical equipment in an emergency. It supports my continuous professional development by keeping up to date with training. This will also help with employability skills, as employers favour people who can respond in an emergency.	I will attend Epi pen First aid training supplied by an approved company.	Complete by the 2 nd of October 2025. Completed on the 2 nd of October 2025.	I will have successfully completed training and know how to administer an Epi pen correctly & confidently.
Qualified in Early Years Education and achieve practitioner status	I will have successfully passed all my assignments for the course and will have received confirmation from my tutors.	I will attend lectures, analyse reading materials, reflect on tutor feedback, and apply critical thinking along with suitable information sources to help me complete assessments.	Complete by July 2027.	I will have knowledge and understanding on Early years which will allow me to implement the curriculum whilst still supporting individual children in my setting.

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Develop my study & academic writing skills.	By using study skills, my credits for my assessments will increase and/or feedback will change from lecturers.	Attending lectures, reading & acting upon feedback from tutors on my assessments, using the study skills support team, using my network at my current setting, and using relevant information related to study skills	Ongoing through studying.	This will help me get better grades, communicate myself clearly, manage my time more effectively, and prepare for professional interactions in my future career.
Gain a Food hygiene certificate.	Achieving a pass rate on the food hygiene test.	I plan to undertake accredited food hygiene training and assessment through my local authority to ensure I meet the required standards for safe food handling.	Complete by the 25 th of November 2025	I will gain confidence in food storage and preparation, including how to correctly handle, store, cook, and serve food. I will also learn how to prevent foodborne diseases and contamination by keeping a clean and sanitary environment. These abilities will increase my employability and

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				demonstrate my dedication to rigorous food safety standards.
Increase my knowledge to enhance purposeful play.	I will confidently produce and explain purposeful play activities that promote children's learning and development, get favourable evaluations from colleagues or supervisors, and see improved engagement and growth in the children I work with	I will research early years frameworks and implement new play invitations for various learning areas within my setting. I will use my network to arrange observations. Applying reflective practice to evaluate and improve my strategies. I will take part in professional development sessions or courses focused on play-based learning and early years pedagogy to enhance my practice.	Ongoing development.	By increasing my knowledge and skills around purposeful play it will allow me to identify opportunities to learn through play, support the children's development. It will lead me to plan activities that are engaging and follow a holistic development.

What is reflection and reflective practise?

Reflective practice (RP) is a critical part within professional settings such as education dating back to Greek philosophy (Brock, 2015, PP. 30). Schön (1983, Cited by Paige-Smith, PP. 42) differentiates between reflection in action, which occurs when people notice respond to their thoughts and feelings in the moment, and reflection on action, which occurs after the event when individuals evaluate their experiences. Brock (2015, PP. 30) suggests professionals reflect both in and on their actions within their teaching goals to develop inclusive education to children. Reflecting on your activities to find the good and undesirable aspects to improve in the future. Bolton (2010. Cited by Brock, 2015. PP.31) suggests that if reflection is not expressed deeply, leaving unclear definitive to give clarity this can prevent practitioners to fully understand it. Hickson (2011, PP.289) agrees reflection involves different interpretations with no single definition, making it challenging for practitioners to relate in a profound analytical manner. This approach is essential to professional development, assessment, and growth. By adopting RP, it allows practitioners to develop into researchers in their environment, like how children discover and research their own (Paige-Smith, 2010. PP. 38).

Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

RP for practitioners is embedded into becoming a fully equipped, qualified practitioner and a crucial requirement of ESTYN, not only to look at what needs to change but to recall and celebrate what went well (Welsh Government, 2022). Denham et al, (2012, cited by Virmani, 2020. PP.1-2.) interestingly suggests that research shows that it is important for practitioners to have social emotional competence as this may affect the quality-of-care children receive. As developmental changes occur rapidly during the early years of children's lives the quality of care they receive is of utmost importance. The concept of RP is to keep producing enriched experiences for children. Practitioners should use their knowledge and ability to critically evaluate their practice, allowing them to make educated decisions and give honest self assessment during reflection process to improve the provision (Brookfield, 1995, cited by Hallet, 2013. PP. 29). Wegerif (2002 cited by Paige-Smith, PP. 41) states that effective relations between the practitioners and the children leads to successful learning and development of the young persons thinking and start developing their interests. Littleton et al. (2005) further explored this concept by investigating the significance of not only adults listening to children but also listening to one another. Research shows how children get knowledge and comprehension within social contexts and how that influences their understanding. Reed (2008, cited by Hallet, 2013. PP. 30) says that RP enables practitioners to evaluate current techniques and make improvements to their work and quality of provision.

The theory of reflective practise:

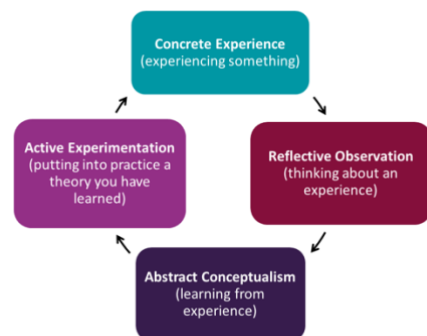
Theories of reflection allow practitioners to assess the links between them, and teaching methods affect children's learning and development. Practitioners need to act ethically, be responsible to evaluate their work and reflect on their interactions with children consistently. Schön (1987) states reflection in action occurs when professionals meet uncertain decisions 'in the moment' and draw on their knowledge to make informed decisions. Reflection on action refers to looking back at the event after it has occurred. It aids practitioners to evaluate earlier choices, analyse outcomes and learn from the experience. These measures help practitioners become self-aware, improve skills, and support autonomy in their learning (Schön 1987, Cited by Willison, 2020. PP.6-7).

Schön's ideas had profound influence on education at various levels, from the national curriculum to individual practitioners' day to day decisions. Given their historical significance and potential future impact, it is imperative to analyse connections between these theories and ideas (Willison, 2020. PP.3).

Dewey's viewpoint provides a more comprehensive understanding of how experience aids in learning, building on Schön's differentiation of RP. Dewey disagreed with Schön's theory, as his view forms the foundation of his ideas on reflection and learning through experience. Dewey believed there are many contributions to an individual's perception and development of understanding (Hilderbrant, 2004. P.2.5). For Dewey, RP is a process that integrates both action and experience, where significance is generated through interaction. Reflection enhances this process by enabling individuals to critically evaluate challenging situations, draw up theory, and assess ideas (Hilderbrant, 2004. P.2.4). Dewey's (1993 cited by Brock, 2015) ideas are relevant to modern day practice. He suggested that if practitioners fail to be reflective, they may fall into outdated beliefs, rely on biases or uninformed opinions, which could hinder the children's development. In his earlier writings, he defined education as a "continuous reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1897), showing that reflection plays a key role in influencing future learning. He saw reflection as a systematic, scientific method of testing concepts in practice to find their effectiveness (cited by Johnson et al, 2018. PP. 1596).

Gibbs' model

<https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/reflectivewriting/gibbs> - 2025

Kolb's model

<https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/reflectivewriting/kolb> - 2025

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

To aid practitioners break down the event and allow clear answers and direction theorists concluded reflective models (Hull University, 2025). Kolb's RP cycle can aid in structuring thoughts - The four stages of the model should be followed before moving forward (Hull University, 2025). The first stage is concrete experience; practitioners engage in a specific activity. The second is reflective observation; the practitioner takes a step back, look at how the event went, ask questions to evaluate what may need to change or what went well to reflect on their work. The third, practitioners engage in abstract conceptualisation. They make assumptions based on their experiences and existing knowledge through reflection. Additionally, they may engage with peers to discuss and evaluate potential theories. The final stage is active experimentation. Practitioners use their knowledge to analyse tasks and make predictions from the earlier stages to put theory into practice by applying their conclusions (Lee and Kumar. 2023).

Similarly to other theorists Gibbs developed a reflective cycle to aid practitioners with reflection. However, it is considered more complex compared to Kolbs as it adds more stages. Practitioners may experience more steps make reflection clearer (University of Cambridge, 2025). Gibbs gives another dimension when reflecting, he encourages focus on the feelings of the experience including before and after. Next, focus is on analysing what went well and what did not. This eases evaluation, enabling analysis and comprehension of the event and leads to conclude what other factors could have contributed to reaching a different outcome. The final stage is to construct a plan of steps to take next time (University of Edinburgh, 2024).

Conclusion:

To summarise, RP allows practitioners to develop critical evaluations on their actions and decisions, which connect experience with theory to support professional growth. When using the models from Schön, Dewey, Kolb, and Gibbs, practitioners will become self aware, adaptable, and ethical. Along with feedback and collaboration, the quality of care and understanding enhance continuous improvement.

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Being professional within practice requires practitioners to act ethically, have ability, comprehension and values that are critical to their work (Bleach, 2014. PP. 187). Professional practice may be assumed to come naturally to practitioners; however, it relates to several skills that the practitioner develops and adapt to. The concept of being 'professional' embodies a level of complexity that makes it challenging to define with clarity (Gasper, 2015. PP.2). Wilson (2023) says that as practitioners lead a professional role in society, it requires consideration, wisdom, experience, autonomy, empathy, and clear communication. These important characteristics aid with professional values, collaborations with multi agencies, and compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEF, ND). This essay will explore the importance of professional practice, how it contributes to holistic development for children and makes for a comprehensive education (Wilson, et al, 2023. PP. 5). Professionalism is shaped by ideas about the knowledge that is considered useful for professional practice (Hordern, 2016. PP. 509).

There are many aspects to professional practice such as values and skills that we will discuss in more depth. Clarke and Winch (2004. PP. 513 cited by Hordern, 2016. PP. 509) suggest that professional practice requires clear, collectively developed communication. This is important as it underpins building relationships with carers. When communicating, exhibiting empathy builds trust and bridge divides between carers and practitioner (Wilson, 2023. PP. 34). Brooker (2010. PP.182) says that these relationships can be tough to establish, especially when there may be a difference of viewpoint which in turn could cause conflict, hindering the child which should be everyone's focus. Although, as suggested by Moyles (2001, PP.89. Cited by Bleach, 2004. PP.193) it may take time for newly qualified practitioners to develop their professionalism and by taking opportunities to be supported in their role will lead to success.

By building a robust relationship with the child, the practitioner should use their knowledge to employ both developmental and accumulative assessment methods from daily interactions (Department of Education [DfE], 2025). This gives a holistic understanding of the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) (DfE, 2025). The Early Years Framework also agrees with Hordern (2016) that professional practice should have input from other professionals to create a

balanced view of each child's development (DfE, 2025). Williams (2002, PP. 55. Cited by Paige-Smith, 2011. PP.43) also agrees that practitioners that work closely together share their findings to each other to better understand and compare analysis. However, Dyer (2018, PP. 348) argues that the government's plan to create children that are school ready focuses on teaching rather than nurturing children as practitioners would be assessing the children's potential towards the ELG.

This leads onto reflective practice, that adopting is not always straightforward (Paige-Smith, 2011. PP.49). Critical reflection entails applying critical thinking by concentrating on specific processes, concepts, problems, or activities (Brock, 2014. PP. 37). However, it is imperative practitioners are critically reflection improve on their own performance and teaching (Brock, 2014. PP. 31). By engaging and understanding continuous development of reflective practice, practitioners will develop their professional role (Brock, 2014. PP.46). As suggested by Brock (2014 PP.32), ongoing personal and professional development should be a continuous and not short term. When practitioners examine their observations, question conclusions and explore meaning to further understanding, that is effective reflective practice (Gasper, 2015. PP.6) Dewey's (1933) view is that 'We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience' (1933. PP.78. Cited by Brock, 2014. PP.33). This relates back to the observations and assessments we looked at in the earlier paragraph and allows for modification to of future planning and 'next steps' put in place for the child.

Building on reflection allows for reviewing work; allowing to uphold the rights and entitlements of children, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, ND). The UNCRC formed key fundamentals that practitioners endorse to ensure that children's rights are upheld in professional practice. There are articles that are significant regarding early years and education. To allow for fairness, responsibility and care to all children, Article 3 says that the best interest of the child is to be at the top of priorities when decisions and actions have an impact on the child (UNICEF, ND). Highlighted in Article 12 is the children's right to convey their views without censorship and have the right to have those views listened to in decisions that affect them (UNICEF, ND). This instills the importance of listening to

the child and gives value to children's voices when planning (DfE, 2025). Article 29 emphasises that educational settings develop children's character, talents, and abilities to their fullest potential, which encourages inclusivity and a holistic approach (UNICEF, ND). The key principles provide an ethical and legal body that supports moral decision making, and reflective child centred practice across professional work.

The implementation of the UNCRC in practice depends on strong multi-agency collaboration, where professionals share responsibility for safeguarding, inclusion, and promoting every child's right to reach their full potential. Multi agency partnership brings together professionals from education, health, and social care sectors working closely to improve children's welfare, safety, and holistic development (DfE, 2025). Working together this way ensures that the diverse needs of each child are met through prompt intervention and interrelated support. The Children's Rights Scheme 2014 in Wales (Welsh Government, 2014, PP. 7,9,12, 13) states that agencies should reach mutual understanding, respect, and effective communication to achieve the best outcomes for children. Gasper (2015. PP.7) states to guide future practice in a time of economic pressure and fast change, it is essential to preserve the knowledge and wisdom from earlier decades. Reduced resources run the danger of fewer practitioners being knowledgeable about best practices, and externally imposed goals might cause attention to shrink, making services less collaborative and leaner when accountability clash with knowledge (Gasper, 2015. PP.7). If multi agencies work in collaboration it enables priority for the child's best interests and supports a comprehensive, child centred practice which links together with Article 3 of the UNCRC.

Multi agencies working collaboratively strengthens safeguarding for children as professionals can identify risks early and coordinate interventions effectively. Safeguarding is the forefront within professional practice across all agencies that work with children. Practitioners are compelled to remain vigilant to any concerns, share information within the multi agency framework whilst keeping the child at the centre to ensure they act in their best interests (Welsh Government, 2014). Frameworks such as the Social Services and Well being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989 (Wales) justifies duties on practitioners to ensure the safety and

well being of children (Welsh Government, 2014; 1989). This demands protection for individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect, while ensuring that their well being and rights are respected (Welsh Government, 2014). Practitioners must make it an essential step into their ongoing development and practice to maintain safeguarding procedures to ensure they remain relevant to respond to emerging risks (NSPCC, ND).

Values and ethics are at the core of the practitioner, it not only shapes how practitioners interact with children, families and other professionals but ensures safeguarding is not only a legal duty but also a moral obligation, reinforcing trust and accountability across all settings (Welsh Government, 2014). Gasper (2015. PP. 4) recognises that practitioners are navigating continual change and should hold a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and understanding, while staying flexible and adaptable in their practice. Effective professionals show commitment to children, families, and communities, alongside openness, adaptability, reflection, and strong ethical values which lead to the rights and well being of children being at the forefront (Wilson, 2023. PP.34). Gasper (2015, PP.3) supports these attributes by promoting collaboration, mutual respect, and confident complex liaisons. Gasper (2015, PP.3) also emphasises that practitioners are able to have the ability to recognise limitations and embrace continuous learning and education. Exacting standards have been set out by The Welsh Government to ensure that care settings provide respectful care that includes inclusivity and is responsive to each individual 's needs (Welsh Government, 2022). In this way, values and ethics underpin professional practice, from observation and planning to collaboration with multiagency teams, and provide a foundation for reflective and child centred practice.

In conclusion, professional practice has been developed on a wide variety of knowledge, skills, and ethical principles (Gasper, 2015; Wilson, 2023). Commitment to moral responsibility, flexibility and continuous learning creates strong relations with children, families, and colleagues; allowing for care that is individual and of high value (Gasper, 2015; Welsh Government, 2022). To allow collaboration and decisions around the child, requires core principles of integrity, respect, empathy, and fairness, allowing a child centralised approach (Gasper, 2015; Wilson, 2023). It is the integration of these qualities that practitioners ultimately allow practitioners to

make a significant impact on the lives of children and communities (Gasper, 2015; Wilson, 2023). In a fast-paced environment it is imperative that practitioners stay adaptable towards changes to allow for prioritisation of the holistic development of the children (Welsh Government, 2022; Wilson, 2023).

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