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Task 1 of 3

Introduction

A nursery assistant plays an essential part in fostering young children's learning, growth, and overall wellbeing. This personal action plan will explore the main skills and qualities needed for this role and assess how these are already demonstrated or how they will be further developed to achieve effectiveness and success in practice (Tassoni et al., 2017).

Essential Skills for a Nursery Assistant Role

As a nursery assistant, I will use practical, organisational, and communication skills to support children's development and wellbeing. I will encourage learning through play, including singing, storytelling, creative tasks, and basic learning activities that promote language, numeracy, and social skills. By observing children closely during these activities, I can monitor progress, maintain accurate records, and adapt support to meet individual needs. Through active engagement, careful observation, and consistent guidance, I will ensure each child feels supported, secure, and confident in their learning and overall development (Bruce T., 2011).

I will support children's daily care needs by assisting with meals, personal hygiene, and changing. Meeting these responsibilities requires patience, sensitivity, and attention to each child's individual needs. By providing consistent, caring support, I will help children feel secure and comfortable, which encourages confidence and active engagement in learning and developmental activities. Through this approach, I will ensure their wellbeing is prioritised while fostering an environment that promotes both personal growth and educational development (Department for Education, 2024).

Ensuring safety and hygiene is a fundamental part of working in a nursery, requiring clean and organised indoor and outdoor spaces while following health and safety guidelines. Consistently applying these standards reduces risks and promotes children's physical wellbeing. At the same time, fostering a warm and supportive environment helps children feel secure, confident, and encouraged to explore. By maintaining both safety and a positive atmosphere, children's overall development, learning, and wellbeing are effectively supported, allowing them to thrive in a nurturing setting (Lavery and Reay, 2014).

Planning and delivering age-appropriate activities is a key part of a nursery assistant's role, involving arts, crafts, games, and educational tasks that develop children's communication, numeracy, and social skills. Collaboration with colleagues ensures smooth daily routines, consistent care, and shared learning experiences. Strong communication skills are essential for interacting with children, parents, and carers, sharing progress and achievements in a professional and supportive way. By actively contributing to teamwork, organising engaging

activities, and building positive relationships with families, I will help children thrive and support their development both in the nursery and at home (Health Careers, 2025).

Identifying Skills Gaps and Strategies for Improvement

In the nursery assistant role, strong communication with children, parents, and colleagues is essential, yet many new practitioners enter the field without sufficient experience in professional interactions, including active listening and clear information sharing. This gap can affect teamwork, parental engagement, and the ability to support children's development effectively. To address this, I plan to attend communication skills training, observe experienced staff, and practise respectful, clear communication with adults and children. Strengthening this skill will help me build trusting relationships, convey information confidently, and collaborate effectively within the nursery setting (Care Learning, 2023).

Many new nursery assistants find accurate observation and recording of children's development challenging, as this requires a solid understanding of child development and the ability to use observations to inform planning and assessment. To address this gap, I plan to undertake training in EYFS observation and assessment methods, practise structured note-taking during daily activities, and seek guidance from experienced staff. Improving these skills will help me understand each child's progress, identify individual needs, and contribute to more effective planning and support for their learning and development. (Department for Education, 2025).

Many nursery assistants enter the role without extensive experience in planning age-appropriate activities and organising daily routines effectively, yet these skills are essential for supporting children's learning and ensuring a smooth day. To improve, I will work alongside experienced staff to observe how sessions are designed and delivered, use EYFS-aligned planning templates and checklists to structure my ideas, and gradually take responsibility for preparing and leading activities. Developing these skills will help me create engaging, developmentally appropriate experiences that support children's interests and promote consistent routines. (Care Learning, 2025).

Interview questions and how I would respond to them

1. Can you please give an example of how you would support a child's learning and development?

I would start by carefully selecting activities and observing children's spontaneous play to identify emerging skills. Such as cause-and-effect understanding or fine motor development. I would then support their learning with enriched resources, focused language, or small-group activities, ensuring they are developmentally appropriate and aligned with the child's interests.

2. How do you ensure safety and inclusivity for all children?

I would maintain a secure environment by following health and safety procedures, supervising activities closely, and regularly checking that equipment and spaces are child-friendly. I would promote inclusivity by recognising and valuing every child's background, adapting activities and resources so all children can participate, and fostering respectful interactions.

3. How would you support a child who has become dysregulated?

I would remain calm and patient, gently engaging with the child to understand their emotions. I would provide reassurance, help them express their feelings, offer safe and stimulating activities, and involve my supervisor or parents when necessary to ensure they feel supported.

Task 2 of 3

Communication: A Key Skill in Health and Social Care

Communication is widely recognised as one of the most crucial skills for professionals in health and social care. It involves not only the clear and accurate exchange of information but also the ability to listen actively, ensuring that the needs, concerns, and preferences of service users are fully understood. In health and social care, effective communication is fundamental to building trust, promoting well-being, and delivering high-quality, person-centred care. Without strong communication skills, other aspects of care, including safety, collaboration, and emotional support, can be compromised (Moss, 2017).

Health and social care practitioners use communication in a variety of ways. Verbal communication enables them to explain procedures, provide instructions, and reassure service users, while non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, helps convey empathy and understanding. Active listening is particularly important, as it allows professionals to respond to both verbal and non-verbal cues, ensuring that service users feel heard and valued. Listening attentively can also help practitioners detect subtle changes in behaviour or mood, which may indicate physical or emotional needs that require attention (Mandatory Training Group, 2025).

Communication is also critical in fostering relationships. Building trust between service users and professionals relies on clear, honest, and compassionate interaction. Professionals who communicate effectively can provide reassurance, reduce anxiety, and create an environment where individuals feel safe and respected. In addition, effective communication supports inclusivity by ensuring that service users from diverse backgrounds, including those with different cultural or linguistic needs, can participate fully in their care. Adaptation of language, tone, and communication methods ensures that every individual is treated with dignity and understood (Ceesay, 2025).

Beyond direct interaction with service users, communication is essential for collaboration within multidisciplinary teams. Health and social care roles often involve working with colleagues from different professional backgrounds, such as nurses, social workers, and therapists. Accurate and timely communication ensures that information about service users' needs, progress, and any changes in condition is shared appropriately. This helps to prevent errors, coordinate care effectively, and make informed decisions. Written communication, including accurate record-keeping and reporting, complements verbal communication by providing a permanent record of care and supporting continuity (London School of Planning Management 2024).

Communication skills also play a key role in handling challenging situations. Health and social care professionals frequently encounter individuals who may be distressed, anxious, or frustrated. By communicating calmly, clearly, and empathetically, practitioners can de-escalate tense situations, reassure service users, and maintain a positive environment. Strong communication also allows professionals to explain procedures or boundaries in a respectful way, helping service users feel involved and informed (Sharki, 2023).

Moreover, communication underpins many other skills in health and social care. For example, problem-solving and critical thinking rely on the ability to explain reasoning and discuss options with colleagues and service users. Observational skills are enhanced when practitioners communicate effectively with service users about how they are feeling or what they need. Similarly, time management and organisation are supported when instructions, schedules, and priorities are clearly shared within the team (UK of School Management, 2024).

In conclusion, communication is a foundational skill for anyone working in health and social care. It enables professionals to build trust, provide reassurance, promote inclusivity, collaborate with colleagues, and respond effectively to complex or challenging situations. By integrating verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and the ability to adapt to individual needs, health and social care practitioners can deliver safe, person-centred care. Without strong communication skills, other essential aspects of care, including empathy, problem-solving, and teamwork, cannot be fully effective. Ultimately, communication is not only a core skill but also a central component of excellence in health and social care practice.

Task 3 of 3

Critical Reflection

Communication is a vital skill in health and social care, involving clear verbal and non-verbal interactions, as well as active listening. It enables practitioners to understand the needs of service users, explain procedures effectively, build rapport, and convey important information to service users, families, and colleagues. Reflecting on my own experiences, I have applied Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to critically analyse my communication skills, identify strengths, and highlight areas for development.

Kolb's model emphasises that learning is most effective when all four stages, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, are applied sequentially. This approach encourages deep thinking, enabling me to examine experiences from multiple perspectives, question assumptions, and link practical encounters to broader theories and professional knowledge. It goes beyond simple recounting by promoting introspection, critical analysis, and action-oriented learning, which is essential for professional growth in health and social care (Cheng et al., 2025).

Concrete Experience

During my practical experiences, I engaged in situations that required both verbal and non-verbal communication. For instance, when assisting a service user with limited mobility, I observed signs of confusion and anxiety. By employing active listening and empathetic body language, I was able to respond appropriately and provide reassurance. Verbal feedback from my lecturer highlighted that, while I managed to communicate supportively, I sometimes assumed understanding without verifying it. This prompted me to critically evaluate my approach, recognise the need for clarity, and plan strategies to improve communication in future scenarios (Kolb, 2015).

Reflective Observation

In this stage, I considered my role, actions, and the context of the situation. I reflected on my thoughts, feelings, and performance, noting that although I maintained a calm and supportive presence, there were moments where my communication could have been more structured. I observed that ensuring comprehension through summarising key points or asking open-ended questions was an area for improvement. Linking this reflection to person-centred care principles emphasised the importance of adapting communication to individual needs and maintaining respect and inclusivity in all interactions (Moss, 2020).

Abstract Conceptualisation

Through analysis, I connected my observations to broader concepts and professional knowledge. Effective communication in health and social care is not only about sharing information but also about fostering trust, understanding emotional cues, and adapting messages for diverse individuals. Literature and professional guidance reinforce that active listening, clarity, and empathy enhance rapport and service user outcomes. The lecturer's feedback also reinforced the importance of verifying understanding and using structured communication methods to avoid misinterpretation. By synthesising these insights, I developed practical strategies to enhance my communication skills in future encounters (Roebuck, 2017).

Active Experimentation

The final stage involves applying these insights in real-world situations. I plan to use SMART goals to improve my communication skills, including summarising instructions, confirming understanding, and incorporating appropriate non-verbal cues. Practising these strategies will allow me to test their effectiveness, adjust based on outcomes, and strengthen my overall professional competence. This iterative approach ensures that reflection translates into tangible improvements, reinforcing continuous learning and professional growth (Webb, 2025).

Conclusion

In conclusion, critically reflecting on my communication skills through Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle has allowed me to explore my thoughts, feelings, performance, and areas for development systematically. Incorporating feedback from my lecturer highlighted practical ways to enhance clarity, active listening, and rapport-building. By moving through the stages of experiencing, observing, conceptualising, and experimenting, I have developed a deeper understanding of the role of communication in health and social care and created an actionable plan for ongoing improvement. This reflection demonstrates how structured, critical analysis can transform experience into professional growth and improved service delivery (Noram and Pavord, 2019).

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