

# Professional Practitioner – ECEY4009

## Cover sheet

Name: Kirstie Harding

Student no. 2408632

Content:

AI cover sheet

Component 1 – PDP

Component 2 – Briefing Paper

Component 3 – Essay

Reference List

### AI Cover Sheet

I confirm that I have not presented AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before and after the use of any AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

## Personal Development Plan

What I already know:

Next steps:

I have already completed Makaton levels 1 and 2 between 01.10.23 – 16.04.24. This has been a valuable resource for implementing communication strategies with practitioners for children with communication needs.

Furthering my knowledge of Makaton signing and symbols would allow me to implement more personalised targets for children, such as their personal interests or environment.

I have had experience with working with and supporting children both post and pre-ADHD diagnosis. In addition to this I also have had personal experience with children with ADHD.

As ADHD can present very differently from one child to the next and there is up-to-date research being published regularly, this additional training will ensure I have relevant information when discussing strategies with childcare practitioners or signposting families to available services and support.

While working on the previous module - Developing successful academic skills and researching academic skills such as note-taking, I briefly looked in to Kettel's Note-taking strategy - Re, re-read, list and compose.

If implemented as part of my work and followed correctly, this model could support my note-taking skills for future research and assignments.

## Personal Development Plan Continued

| Objectives                                                                                                                                                              | Actions (How will I achieve this objective/ what needs to be done?)                                                                                    | Resources (What support and resources are needed to achieve this objective?)                                                                                                                                | Target Date for achieving objective.                                         | Success criteria (How will I know I have achieved this goal; how will I review this?)                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>To complete Makaton Level 3 &amp; 4</i>                                                                                                                              | Discuss plans to further my Makaton knowledge with my current line manager. Look into available courses.                                               | Access online course through <a href="#">Learn Makaton</a>                                                                                                                                                  | To be completed by:<br>1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025                        | To confidently implement specific Makaton targets to families and practitioners to support preverbal children's communication                                                                                 |
| <i>Further my knowledge of ADHD and support children with setting</i>                                                                                                   | Apply for online course,<br>Develop a leaflet for families to better support children,<br>Develop an ADHD awareness power point for other practioners. | Access the online course through website: <a href="#">ADHD Training Course   Online Course &amp; CPD Certification</a><br>Research authors such as (Hallowell 2023) and (Raine 2024) to support powerpoint. | To be completed by<br>1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025                             | To present a well-informed PowerPoint presentation to setting practitioners. Distribute leaflets to families. Confidently implement strategies, routines and activities to better support children with ADHD. |
| <i>To improve my note taking skills by using Kettel's note taking model - Read, re-read, list and compose (RRLC) to support future research and assignment writing.</i> | Look at Kettel's model in depth and the theory behind it. Look at the break down of each step and use it in practice writing.                          | Access reading: <a href="#">ParaphraseWithout Plagiarism_UseRRLCRead RereadListCompose_Kettel andDeFauw 2018.pdf</a>                                                                                        | To be implemented by:<br>1 <sup>st</sup> December 2025<br>and to be ongoing. | To confidently use the RRLC model during research for assignments. To be able to note-take more efficiently without fear of accidental plagiarism.                                                            |

## Reflective Practice in the Early Years

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <p><b>What is reflection and reflective practice?</b></p> <p>Faller et al (2020) and Marshall (2019) both agree, it may be difficult to find a true definition of 'Reflection' as this can vary depending on the author's perspective. However (Third 2022) describes reflection as a learning tool that can aid early years practitioners to synthesise, explain, make sense of and develop meaning from experiences by questioning why things happened the way they did and how can experiences be improved. Third (2022) also states reflective practice is not something that comes naturally to everybody and in fact some professionals can find it to be an uncomfortable task. However Fuller et al (2020) insists it is essential for adult learning and improving practice, agreeing with Brookfield's (2017) statement, that when practitioners engage in reflection and reflective practice, they can make informed decisions about whether the work they are carrying out is best practice or whether it could be improved. When practitioner put these practices into place, they ensure that they are providing better quality experiences for children and their families.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p><b>Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?</b></p> <p>Brock (2015) describes Reflection and reflective practice as core values of what is to be a professional. He argues both are needed for improving everyday practice, providing quality provisions as well as supporting problem solving. Brook (2015) continues to explain that when pratitioners reflect on their own practice they can learn not only from experience, but learn about themselves, the way they work or study, compare home and work differences and to look at how society or cultures influence practice. However, Durham university (ND) emphasises reflective practice should be more than just personal reflection and that collaborative reflection is also needed as this leads to a deeper level of critical reflection. Ay Yeung (2018) also highlights the important of this when speaking of personal experience and the benefits of problem solving with other professionals through collaborative reflection and gaining other people's perception, knowledge and experience to aid solutions. He also suggests that reflection should be evaluated from a 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective – for professionals to imagine themselves as an observer.</p> |
| <p><b>The theory of reflective practise:</b></p> <p>The theories behind the models of reflection and reflective practice that we use today originated from the work of both John Dewey and Donald Schon.</p> <p>John Dewey, who was a psychologist, philosopher, and educator emphasised the importance of involving the student to reflect on practice. He believed that experiences shape students and when reflective practice is part of the learning it gives meaning and relevancy which supports growth (Third 2022). Dewey's theory of reflection also supports his overall view of a hands-on approach to learning. Dewey's original model of reflection took learner through stages of identifying what wasn't working well, identifying problems, analyse and planning, reasoning, testing and solution. (Brook 2015)</p> <p>Schön's (1983, cited in Hallet2013) work of reflective practice was based on that of Dewey. However, he is most known for his theory of reflecting in practice and reflecting on practice. In practice referring to reflecting during an activity, in situation when it is necessary to think or act in the moment and at times consider about what to do next. Reflecting on action requires thinking about changes could be made to improve the experience or practice for the next time, taking time to process, thinking of other influences, perspective of others involved, barriers and linking practice to theory, which is why Schon describes reflection on practice as a higher level of reflection. (Bolton, 2018.p.6).</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## Reflective Practice in the Early Years Continued

Kolb's model



Diagram A

Brookfield's model



Diagram B:

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

Kolb's (1984) cycle of reflective practice as seen in diagram A, was designed to support people learning using their experiences and is based on 4 stages that require the learner to work through each one of the stages before moving on to the next. Once worked through all of the stages, the cycle loops back around to start again; by doing so it allows any new experience that has been created to be reflected on again. When broken down these elements appear to be easy to follow and could be put in place during day-to-day activities. However, Morris (2020) suggests Kolb's model may lack some clarity of what is concrete experience which can then lead to different interpretations of practice depending on the viewer's perception, experience, values and beliefs. Although a valid concern, this potential flaw has not changed the fact that Kolb's model is perhaps the most academically used model regarding experiential learning theory.

Like Kolb's cycle of reflection, Brookfield's framework, which can be found above in diagram B, also has four components. However, Brookfield's areas are described as lenses to encourage the reviewer to examine their assumptions by viewing their practice through interconnecting lenses. This practice could also encourage collaborative reflection when looking at the practice through the views of others (Brookfield 2017). Lucas (2018) states that when using Brookfield's lenses model for reflection through peer observation, it is potentially more time-consuming than using other models; however, the benefits of this reflective practice outweigh the time needed to perform it.

### Conclusion

As one of the leading theorists of education, Dewey has paved the way for others such as Schon, Brookfield, Kolb's and others, in the way of reflection and reflective practice. Schon's dividing of in practice and on practice has broken down and simplified reflective practice to be easier to comprehend and to successfully know how to reflect. Models of reflections such as shown in diagram A and B; even though varied, all can support professionals to fully reflect on their day-to-day practice, thus improving the provisions for children in the early years.

## **Recognising and analysing different aspects of professional practice in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years.**

### **Professional practice**

Eraut (1994, Hallet. cited in 2013) describes a professional as a highly educated practitioner with ownership of specific knowledge or qualification. However, although Gasper 2015 acknowledges that many industries believe that professionalism only applies to those with either a relevant qualification or expertise, he believes that in the Early Years there is an importance in the value of quality practitioners whether they hold formal qualifications or not, practitioners who demonstrate values such putting the child first and combining theory and understanding of development, who are continuously dedicated to best practice and improving practice.

### **Communication and relationships**

Oberhuemer (2005, cited in Dyer, 2018) argues that the building and maintaining relationships within Early Years, both within and beyond the setting is a key characteristic of what is it to be a professional. He believes that for practitioners, relationships are necessary to their practice and should be positive, open, and sensitive. He states children should be valued as individuals, being given a voice over and the autonomy to make choices over what and how they learn. He promotes working in partnership with parents and building relationships that are supportive, respectful of differences and based willingness to work together and share information, with an even balance of power that parents might not find when dealing with more formal education provisions and making sure that settings should be a positive and stable environment for all children.

### **Values**

Welsh gov (2022) states all professions have unique skills, knowledge, and ethical standards that guide them in what knowledge and responsibilities are required and how to execute what has been learned. It continues to characterise a professional and professional values, some of which are: recognising the needs for standards of practice and commitment to provide a service that goes beyond the personal interests of the professional. These values are critical to the ethical identity of the professional.

The Welsh government (2015) lists seven core aims within the Early Years framework. These aims display the values that the Welsh government deem necessary within all Early Years settings for all children in Wales. The values that Welsh government insist on to uphold these aims are to ensure that all children have access to education and learning, that they are free from harm, that they have access to play, leisure and cultural activities, that they are treated with respect, are not disadvantaged by poverty and that all children have a safe home and community. These core values are underpinned by legislation under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Early education (2011) rightfully believes as the Wales .gov that every child deserves the best possible start in life and that all children receive the support needed to fulfil their potential. To ensure this, The Code of Ethics lists the values it places importance on, such as: protecting the

## **Recognising and analysing different aspects of professional practice in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Continued.**

well-being of children and families, respecting communities, upholding professional relationships and taking action against any unethical practice. It emphasises that all of the above are the responsibility of all Early Years professionals.

### **Knowledge of safeguarding**

Welsh Government (2022) states that all practitioner working with children or young people in Wales should have knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding policy or child protection policy within their workplace as well as who is, and how to contact the designated safeguarding person. All practitioners paid or volunteering need to have an understanding of their responsibilities of safeguarding children and young people. Practitioner should be confident in reporting concerns and making sure action is taken regarding a safeguarding concern. Both of which are stipulated in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Gov. Wales (2022) stresses that practitioner should also be aware that information sharing supports good safeguarding practice. Concerns of breaching the Information Protection Act (2018) or general data protection regulations (GDPR) should not stop any practitioner from sharing information in order to prevent abuse, neglect and/or harm to a child, young person or their family.

### **Multi-agency working**

As the NSPCC 2024 insists that listening to and capturing the voice of the child is central to effective safeguarding practice. Welsh Government (2022) Working collaboratively with multi-agencies is necessary to ensure that professional practice is of a child centred approach. As no single practitioner holds the full picture of a child's needs and circumstances, this approach needs to be upheld across all organisations involved when making decisions about children's lives along with working in partnership with their families.

To ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time everyone involved needs to be aware that they have a responsibility in identifying concerns, ensuring information is shared and taking prompt action if needed. To ensure collaboration effectively all organisations, agencies and practitioners need to fully understand the role they play, and the roles of the other professionals involved. Effective sharing of information between practitioners, organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of needs. Serious case reviews have highlighted the significance of failing to share information in a timely manner can have severe consequences of the safety and welfare of children (Welsh Government 2022).

### **Observation and planning**

Welsh Government (2008) insists it is essential that all practitioners working with children should have an understanding of children's needs and development and how to support them. Implementing regular observations mean practitioners should be able to plan more appropriately to support children's individual needs and development. By observing children during activities practitioner can gather information regarding skills attained and current levels

## **Recognising and analysing different aspects of professional practice in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Continued.**

of development across all areas of learning and whether they need further opportunities to consolidate their learning. Practitioners will also be able to gather information on children's personal preferences and social interactions, highlights their strengths and identify if any child in need of additional learning provisions. Not all observations need to be recorded every time, but it is important to use appropriate information concerning children's development and any positive outcomes in future planning. Gathering information from observations can not only support future planning in ensure best practice and provisions.

### **United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) lists 54 articles of rights which apply to every child. Unicef (2022) explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children access and enjoy all their rights. Many of the rights are interlinked and no right is more important than another. As previous stated the rights are the underpinning of the core aims of the Wales.gov Early Years framework and ensure a child centred approach is priority, which is reflected in NSPCC (2024) when stating, hearing the child's voice is central to practice as detailed in Article 12.

It can be clear to see which other of the articles have had most influence when the Welsh Assemble government formally adopted the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2004, summarising the articles into the seven core aims that directly impact the Early Years practitioner (Children in Wales 2024), such as Article 3 which regards to safeguarding and states that the best interest of the child should be a priority. Article 13 which states children have a right to express themselves. Article 19 which state that children have the right to protection against violence, abuse and neglect. Article 28 which states all children have a right to an education and article 29 (goals of education) which ensures education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. Article 31 is to ensure every child has a right to relax, play, cultural and artistic activities.

### **Conclusion**

As children's individual needs can vary significantly, for Early Years practitioners it can be challenging to meet all the needs of all the children at all of the time. However, with legislation in place that influences policies and guidelines to ensure that practice is child centred, that practitioners are given the knowledge of why and how to build relationships and how to use effective communication for collaborate working with families and other organisations, that practitioner can gain the confidence to uphold values and access the skills and tools to reflect on experience and provide best practice. If practitioners are given the support to achieve the above, then giving all children a flying start to life is also achievable.

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