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ECEY4009

Word count for PDP – 475 Word count for briefing paper – 1023 Word count for written essay - 1577

Portfolio of three parts

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Part 1:

No	Objective	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 <u>goal</u> , how will I review this?)
1	Complete my early years degree in Swansea university.	I will achieve this goal by completing assignments, completing placement hours as part of this course and attending lectures on a Monday evening.	Using resources given by lecturers (referencing handbook, course handbook, reading lists). Talking to lecturers if struggling and need guidance and talking to other students on my course so that we can all work together and gain an understanding together.	2026	This goal will be ongoing until 2026 but when getting feedback from previous assignments will help gain a better picture if I am on the right track.
2	Complete a PGCE course	After completing my early years degree hopefully moving on to complete my PGCE.	After completing this degree, I would like to move on and further my learning to hopefully complete my PGCE. I will use similar resources to my early years degree and speak to my lectures from that degree to aid me in the right way <u>in order to</u> complete my PGCE	2027/2028	I haven't started this goal yet but once completing my early years degree, I would have gained a better understanding on completing assignments, being able to manage my time effectively and all different parts of academic writing. (referencing etc.).
3	Complete an ALN course	To gain a better knowledge when working with children with ALN in my setting I would like to complete a course to gain a better understanding <u>and also</u> different techniques when working with the children.	Speaking to our ALNCO in my setting to see if they can guide me in the right direction or maybe sign me up to courses linking to ALN. Also speaking to other work colleagues who work with children with ALN and observe what they do to get an understanding practically.	2024/2025	I would've gained a better understanding on how to work with children with ALN, I would've found techniques to use when working with them. I could also feedback to other colleagues who are wanting training on ALN so that have a better understanding.

I am working in a primary school in a year 3 class. While working I am also completing my early years degree. After completing this degree, I hope to further my knowledge and complete my PGCE course as well. By using this PDP it will help me identify my goals and when I want to achieve them but also what I will need to do in order to achieve them. This is a very useful personal plan which will hopefully help me guide me to complete my goals.

Part 2

What is reflection and reflective practise?

According to Lindon *et al* (2016) A crucial component of developing ones professional skills is reflection, which is linked to accepting responsibility and being open minded. To establish and maintain an active, self sustaining early years practice that can take on new challenges, reflective practise is essential. Professional training heavily emphasises reflection and reflective practice which are fundamental values of the progression. In many fields, including education, health and social services, reflection is encouraged and is a crucial component of professional practice.(Brock 2015). Pacey (2016) also adds that the process of reflecting on and analysing our work with the intention of developing, refining challenges and improving is known as reflective practice. This should also be an ongoing cycle of self reflection and development.

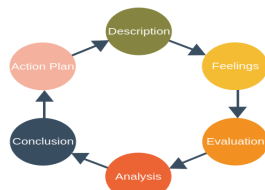
Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

Through reflective practise in early years, professionals can better understand their work, gain more self assurance, use their initiative, develop new skills, knowledge and understanding and raise the standard of care and education offered to children. (Birthto5matters, 2021). To apply professionalism into everyday practice we must complete ongoing professional improvements, be critical and be mindful and also have effective communication and teamwork skills. Deeper levels of critical reflection results from group or collaborative reflection. Groups of practitioners or teachers at any level get together to plan, carry out, observe, and assess a lesson as part of collaborative reflection. Lindon *et al* (2016) suggests that important theoretical stances, some of which have come from other fields of study, have influenced reflective practice in the early years. To determine how to modify and advance practice, reflection should keep up to with the latest practices and underlying presumptions. (Brock, 2015)

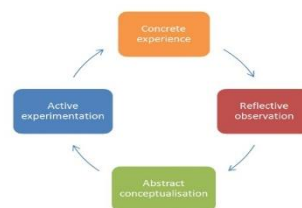
The theory of reflective practise:

In a learning context, reflection, according to Dewey, is more than simply describing a passive recollection of an event. The process of reflection is intentional and active. To learn, one must think. In Dewey's words it is an "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads" (Dewey 1933 pg. 118). The theory behind Reflective Practice is based on Dewey's work. He distinguished between two categories of action: "reflective action" and "routine action." Tradition, habit, and clear and specific regulations like laws serve as the guiding principles for routine action. These behaviour patterns are consistent and unlikely to alter given the current situation. Reflective action is different, though, in that it calls for ongoing questioning and self-appraisal. Dewey thought that in order to make sense of events or circumstances that we found confusing or difficult to explain, reflection could be quite helpful. According to him, learning reflection should involve thinking back on the incident and then asking questions to investigate why things happened the way they did and what might have been done to produce a different result. On the other hand, Schön expanded on Dewey's ideas and established a stronger connection between professional practice and professional growth. Schön asserted that practitioners can make hidden knowledge explicit through reflection. Schön distinguished between two forms of reflection: reflection in action, or "thinking on your feet," and reflection on action, which is done after the fact. Schön also adds that some people opt for the marshy lowlands. They intentionally engage in complex yet vitally significant issues, and when asked to explain their research strategies, they mention experience, trial and error, intuition, and perseverance. Other experts choose to take the high road. They choose to limit themselves to a narrowly technical practice because they are hungry for technical rigor, committed to projecting an image of strong professional competence, or afraid to venture into a world where they feel unprepared.

Gibbs' model



Kolb's model



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

Graham Gibbs created the Gibbs' Reflective Cycle in 1988 to provide structure for learning from experiences. It provides a framework for analysing experiences and, because it is cyclical, works especially well for repeated experiences, enabling you to draw lessons and make plans from both successful and unsuccessful experiences. There are six stages covered: description of the experience, feelings and thoughts about the experience, evaluation of the experience, both good and bad, analysis to make sense of the situation, conclusion about what you learned and what you could have done differently and an action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future, or general changes you might find appropriate. Gibbs' model starts with a summary of the experience being reflected on, just like other models do. It then invites us to concentrate on how we felt about the experience, both before and after. Assessing the experience is the next step; from our perspective, what aspects of it were positive or negative. This assessment can then be used to analyse the situation and attempt to make sense of it. A conclusion is then made from this analysis regarding what additional steps, if any, could be taken to achieve a different result. Creating an action plan of actions that can take the next time we encounter a similar circumstance is the last step. Moreover, Kolb's (1984) model goes one step further. This model, which is based on theories about how people learn, has four important stages and is centred on the idea of understanding being developed through the use of real-world experiences: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract Conceptualization and active Experiments. According to the model, we begin with an experience, which could be something entirely new to us or a recurrence of something that has already happened. The next step is for us to think back on the experience and record anything we haven't seen before. As a result, we begin to generate new ideas. For instance, we attempt to determine the possible cause of unexpected events. Applying our new concepts to various scenarios is the last step. This illustrates how our experiences and reflections directly lead to learning. This model is comparable to the one that young children use to learn concepts like hot and cold. They might encounter something hot, get burned, and become more watchful of.

Conclusion

From creating this briefing paper, it is evident that reflection in early years is crucial for a successful professional practitioner. Dewey and schon both have different views on reflection and to why they think we should reflect. After looking at two models of reflection, it is clear that each model could be used for different types of reflecting.

Part 3 Recognise and analyse the significance of different aspects of professional practise and why these are important in meeting the individual and inclusive needs of children.

Farhadi *et al.*, (2021) discuss 'professional self-concept' as a multifaced idea that encompasses elements such as professional behaviour, role development, personal understanding and cognition. Similarly, Perez (2019) acknowledges that professionalism is 'attitude based' with social and behavioural implications implying that the concept of a 'professional self-image' is debatable and that becoming a professional is ultimately up to the individual. Perez (2019) also explains that the concept of 'professionalism' is based on values that direct the abilities, knowledge and moral principles needed to carry out a job role. In regard to early years practice, article 3 of the UNCRC states that the child's best interests and welfare should always come first, regardless of your background or experience.

Johansson and Einarstadotir (2018) states that values are 'principles that guide human actions and judgements of whether actions are desirable or not'. Values such as social justice, trust and respect and integrity are important for a professional practitioner. The idea of social justice holds that all people should have equal access to economic, political and social opportunities both now and in the future. Expectations of positive behaviour that fosters genuine relationships building, demonstrates concern for the needs and feelings of those involved, and demonstrates respect for the natural world and its finite resources are known as trust and respect. Professionals that are truthful and demonstrates a constant and unwavering adherence to high morals and ethical standards and values follow the practices of integrity. A key value for a practitioner in early years adapts a professional stance towards education and learners that aligns with the goal of creating a world that is sustainable and equitable. According to the general teaching council for Scotland (2021) values are significant in early years practice as education professionals, assist in creating professional identities. Values encourage and strengthen personal and unwavering dedication to all learners and colleagues. Values encourage and support professionals in looking beyond the subject or classroom. By attending to each child's unique needs, it can help us to know and develop the whole child. Values improve our understanding of our part in cooperative work with various partners, such as communities and families. By following these values in early years, we acknowledge the role that we can take part in to safeguard young children. Brock (2017) implies that there are seven key principles of early years practice. These include knowledge, qualifications, training and professional development, skills, autonomy, values, ethics and rewards. Based on a study that looked at the individual professional reflections of 12 early childhood educators in England. Brock explores these seven interconnected aspects of professionalism. At the core of their professionalism, were their understandings of the needs of children and how they interpreted curriculum and policy in ways that they felt satisfied those needs.

A vital part of working as an early year's practitioner involves building positive relationships with children and young people, families and carers, other professionals and colleagues. To gain positive relationships, practitioners must have

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good communication skills. According to Dunnill (2009), when working with children, young people, families and carers, effective communication is essential. Effective communication is a central component of the common care curriculum. It entails listening to children, young people and those who care for them. Questioning, understanding and responding appropriately. When trying to communicate through nonverbal communication practitioners must change their tone of voice facial expressions and posture. We must also have eye contact with the child and use gestures. To meet the needs of children, teaching, curricula, and care should be flexible. This may involve giving children who are at risk of falling behind specialized support. By setting high goals, being ambitious, and being open to trying new approaches or removing obstacles to help children realize their full potential, practitioners can make sure that environments are inclusive. (department of education). Building a communicative relationship with the children and their families, it enhances and helps children to create an identity and a sense of belonging. This echoes the Reggio Emilia approach where the involvement of all educators, families, the children and the community all work together. It is seen as the best way to build children's confidence which allows them to create their own learning experiences with the support of more knowledgeable others when needed. This open approach allows strong bonds to be made and therefore communication made easier which is beneficial for the children. Similarly, Vygotsky (1996) also states that children learn from knowledgeable educators and experiences too.

According to Hyson and Tomlinson (2014), all professionals who work with children have distinct roles, abilities, and responsibilities; however, regardless of their role, all early year's practitioners play a crucial role in helping families and children. To be a successful early year professional, practitioners need to possess a certain set of skills, dispositions, attitudes, and competencies in addition to a thorough understanding of early childhood. The EYWC (2021) and the EYA (2021) emphasize the vital role that early year's professionals play in promoting the holistic development and education of young children within early years settings. This is because the first five years of a child's life are a crucial and a pivotal period of learning and development. Safeguarding the children is a duty shared by all practitioners within early years. It includes reporting concerns that a child may be in danger, acting in a way that doesn't endanger anyone and ensuring that all safeguarding concerns are addressed. (Welsh government, 2020). It is the duty of all those who work with children to ensure their safety. In order for concerns regarding neglect, trafficking, exploitation, or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to be promptly and effectively addressed, they must be able to report concerns. One in five children in the UK have suffered from severe abuse at some point in their lives, according to data from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

The Welsh Government (2023) identified many multi agency roles that work in partnership with early years settings. The national minimum standards (NMS) goal is to give providers flexibility so they can create high quality services that are suited to the needs of children, parents and the communities. The curriculum for Wales (CFW) encourages cooperation and interdisciplinary planning instruction and learning. this allows children to integrate various experiences, knowledge, abilities and create connections across their learning. the care inspectorate Wales (CIW) is the regulatory body that inspects various early childhood settings. Moreover,

ESTYN inspect Wales training and education system. ESTYN's vision is to raise the standard of education, training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. Social care Wales collaborate with individuals who utilize care and support services and organisations to help lead social care reform in Wales. Their goal is to improve care and support for children and young people, their families and carers in Wales.

Another essential ability and component of an early year's practitioner job role is observation. The planning process is informed by observations. To guide future planning and evaluation of the children's accomplishments, practitioners should record information about the children's growth and accomplishments when observing children and share it with practitioners. Through observations, practitioners can determine the child's progress plan and highlight the child's growth, strengths, and abilities in all subject areas as well as their accomplishments, dislikes, and preferences. Similarly, observations are essential to the safeguarding process and to spotting any changes in appearance or behaviour that might call for a concern. Observations not only inform planning and progression but can be used as assessment evidence and support professional practise. According to Allen *et al* (2020) Effective parent-teacher partnerships have been shown to positively affect children's learning and development in early childhood settings. The Pen Green Centre for Children Under Five created a model that depicts conversations between centre practitioners and the adults living with the child. To inform the staff's provision for the child, staff members observe the children in the centre and ask parents to share their observations of their children in the house. To influence the child's provision at home, staff members share their observations with parents. Given that parental influence and the home environment are far more significant than what occurs in the setting, this is especially crucial. The EPPE project (2003) shows that five areas that are especially crucial when working with children ages three to five were identified by the case studies. These were: staff knowledge and comprehension of the curriculum, the calibre of adult-child verbal interactions, understanding of how young children learn, the ability of adults to assist children in resolving conflicts, and assisting parents in promoting their children's education at home.

According to the children and young people's commissioner of Scotland (2024) all children and young people are entitled to the following four general principles under the UNCRC. Children shouldn't be discriminated against (article 2), children should have their best interests accounted for as a primary consideration (article 3). This also links to one of the core values of an early year's practitioner. Children have the right to have their views heard and taken seriously (article 12). These four guiding principles underpin how the convention should be interpreted and put into practice.

To conclude, it is evident that observation, working in partnership with multi agencies and values and principles are all vital parts of working in an early year setting and as an early year's practitioner. It is clear that children learn best from knowledgeable and real-life experiences. Knowing the children is crucial to be able to meet the children's needs.

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