

Professional Practitioner

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I have not used AI to complete my work

Professional Development Plan

What do I know already

I know the importance in safeguarding. When training to become a swimming teach for young children, I studied safeguarding and its importance in an early years setting.

What have I learnt so far

I have learnt the importance of brain development in a young child's first stages of life. When doing the 1000 days assignment, I learnt a lot of information about brain development in a young child and its relevance in a person's adulthood.

What do I want to develop

I want to learn more about children with ALN and how to accompany to their needs in an early year setting. Not only do I want to learn about this in a setting but also in day-to-day life.

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 goal, how will I review this?)
Become more advanced in Welsh speaking	For this objective to be completed I would need to spend more time in learning the language in more detail. I can count and say certain colours in Welsh, but I would like to be able to have a conversation in	Resources such as Welsh books and websites will be needed. The Duolingo app will also be a tool used. A diary will also be	01/09/25	After my target date I will speak to those who speak Welsh in my family. I will have a conversation with them and get their feedback on my Welsh speaking skills. If my goal is not

	Welsh. Each week I will set myself a goal to learn one new sentence. I will record my progress in a diary	needed to note down my progress.		reached, I will continue to improve on my skills in my free time until my goal is met.
Gain more knowledge on children with ALN	I will need to set a target each week to learn at least two new pieces of information. Whether that be different learning needs and/or coping mechanisms. Potentially go to a setting during the summer holidays so that I can learn via experience. I will need to evaluate the work that I do each work and reflect upon it to be able to reach my goal.	YouTube videos and books will be a beneficial resource. Websites will also be used. I can take an online course as a tool to achieve my goal.	31/08/25	Once I have passed the online course on children with ALN I will be able to identify key information on the topic. I will feel confident in a situation that may be upon me.
Complete my PGCE	Apply for and complete the PGCE course after completing the Early Years Education course. Complete placements in different settings. Use information and skills learnt from Early Years Education course and apply to my PGCE course. Regularly reflect and review my work.	Resources needed will be university books, YouTube videos, articles, and websites.	31/05/28	At the end of the year when I have completed the course, I will be able to review my work by looking back at past assignments and reflecting upon my marks.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is seen as a way to gain insight into one's professional practice. It involves analysing past work and learning from it, (hcpc, 2021). An example of reflective practice can be looking back to an experience and picking out what went well and what did not go so well, analysing those points and deciding where to improve. By challenging oneself, it allows room for growth into professional practice. Reflection can be done as a solo project or as a group. This is known as collaborative reflection. Reflection can be used as an opportunity to gain new information on a certain matter and/or topic. Reflection is individual to each person with individual experiences, but all can be analysed and learnt upon, (U.O.C, no date).

One of the most influential figures behind the reflection practice theory is Donald Schön. Schön first introduced his theory in his 1982 book, "The Reflective Practitioner". Throughout the book he identifies three different components of reflection. These being knowledge in action, reflection in action and reflection on action. Knowledge in action is the skills and intelligence previously learnt and applying them to tasks at hand. Reflection in action can be described as acting in the moment, for example when teaching a class and having to make a critical decision in that moment. Reflection on action is considered to be analysing an experience after it has happened. Picking out situations that can be improved upon, (Lara Gorden, 2025). Another theory of reflective practice was acknowledged by John Dewey. His theory highlights that it is not just about the addition of new information but the continuing action of reflecting and learning upon the new information gained. The timeline of reflection starts off with the unknowing of a situation and ends with understanding. Dewey has a strong focus upon the emphasis of experience and continuous learning in order to be able to develop as a practitioner. Dewey stated reflection as a development of analysing experiences and applying the information learnt to make more enhanced decisions in the future. His theory allows practitioners to think critically about their actions. This is similar to Schön's identification of reflection in action. Dewey's reflective cycle is made up of three key systems, critical examination, problem solving and continuous improvement, (T.I, 2024). Kolb's theory is also similar to Schön and Dewey. Kolb's reflective model is known as experiential learning. Linked to Schön and Dewey, this theory highlights the importance of experience in learning. His cycle is made up of experience, analysis and evaluation. Once these steps were completed it allowed room for new experiences to be made which would lead to more cycles of reflection, (Dr Nicole Brown, no date).

Pros of Kolb's cycle can be how it is easy to understand, and it is suited for experimental learning in educational settings. Cons can be how it may not be shown with enough detail to carry out a thorough reflection and how it would not be best suited for an individual reflection.

Pros of Gibbs cycle can be how it provides more detail and structure and how it includes feelings and emotions although on the other hand a con to this style of reflection can be how it can have the potential to be time consuming and possibly too complex for certain situations.

In conclusion, reflection is a strong tool for professional growth, helping practitioners improve their teaching, knowledge and communication. Theorists such as, Schön, Kolb and Gibbs all offer different valuable frameworks each with their own strengths.

Reflective practice is applied to many aspects in early years practice. These being, teaching, planning, assessing and communicating to both children and adults, (L.S, 2023). According to Lauren Toole, reflective practice is important for early years because reflecting on experiences with young children can give a deeper understanding as to how children learn and behave. The knowledge gained from the reflection can be used as a tool to create more "effective learning experiences". Primed decisions can be identified and chosen leading to improvement to the practice, (Showcase Training, 2023). Some examples of reflection can be journaling and peer observation. By reflecting in early years practice it helps to support the individual needs of a child. Similar to Lauren Toole's opinion, highlighting key areas in practice can help a practitioner to understand and respond to diverse needs, (Zero To Three, 2024). Reflective practice enables a practitioner to develop a critical understanding of different practices and learn from each experience. Collaborative reflection can be used in a setting. This can lead to effective and beneficial communication between practitioners. This is important because it can lead to better outcomes which will benefit the young children, (Kathy Brodie, 2025),



(U.O.E, 2024)



(Nicole Brown, no date)

Kolb's reflective practice cycle is seen to be a circular process which has a continuous flow which is carried out in four stages. Its focus is on learning through experiences and reflecting upon them. The stages in which make up Kolb's theory are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Kolb's theory is mainly focused on the cognitive process of reflection. Emotions are not strongly mentioned throughout. Actions are highlighted in Kolb's theory and are seen as a beneficial way to learn and gain new information. Kolb's theory can be used in different situations and aspects.

Gibbs reflective practice is seen more as a step-by-step process which emphasises reflective thinking on emotional responses and actions. Gibbs reflective practice is made up of six stages. The stages being description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. Compared to Kolb's reflective cycle, Gibbs theory has a stronger emotional aspect, highlighting feelings and emotional responses. Similar to Kolb's theory, Gibbs reflective practice is also based upon actions. Unlike Kolb's theory, this reflective practice is a more fixed structure which offers less flexibility to other situations.

Both Gibbs and Kolb show a valuable reflection process. However, their differences are shown upon how they go through their process. Gibbs focuses on emotions and feelings whereas Kolb is more focused on experimental learning. Kolb's theory would suit collaborative reflection more than it would suit individual reflection. Gibbs theory would suit individual reflection, (Owen Williams, 2017).

Written Piece

Professional practice is known as actions an individual may make in order to help apply knowledge to a certain job and role, (N.D.A, no date). It is the way an individual can carry out and conduct their work. Professional practice is made up of key skills that make an individual into a professional. It allows room for professional development as it enables ongoing learning. In many professions, professional practice highlights the areas of others focussing in on their needs. It can involve collaborative work which requires communication skills. To sum professional practice up, it is about understanding and portraying the core values of a profession.

According to Jennifer Herrity, there are fifteen characteristics of a professional. Characteristics are the qualities in an individual that reach the standards of a professional. One of these characteristics is to be ethical. Honesty and sincerity make up ethical behaviour. Language is also a characteristic. Little use of slang words and inappropriate language are encouraged as using that form of communication sounds less professional. Emotional control is also seen as a key characteristic. Keeping calm and holding back emotions in certain situations is expected. For example, young children typically mimic the actions of the individuals they look up to. If their practitioner were to panic in a situation, they would also, (Indeed, 2025).

Values are highly important in professional practice. Values such as appearance, manners and punctuality are seen as important in order to act professional, (U.O.B, 2025). In order to create a professional and positive environment in an early years setting, values also come into play in this area. Communication between practitioners is advised. This can also link back to collaborative reflection. By communication with others, it can help to avoid unnecessary issues. Respecting cultures and committing to inclusion is another value that is expected. By doing this it creates a safe and comfortable space for the children, (Kathy Graham-Whitehouse, no date). Other values that are expected for early years practitioners are to have a sense of fun and to have an understanding and caring nature. Values are critically important to professional practice because they serve as an ethical and moral foundation which guides how professionals behave, interact with others, and make decisions. Professional values help individuals to understand what is right or wrong in challenging situations, (Kendra Cherry, 2024).

Communication and relationships are essential to professional practice, especially when working with young children because they directly influence the quality of care, learning and emotional support that children receive. Consistent and positive communication helps children to feel safe and valued which is when children thrive the most which then leads to forming a foundation for secure relationships. This sense of security is a factor in improving their emotional development and

willingness to engage and learn in those environments, (R.C, no date). Open lines of communication allow professionals to observe and understand each child's unique needs and preferences. This communication enables support that promote a child's overall development and well-being, (C.L, no date). This can also be linked to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. As well as this, regular and transparent communication with parents and caregivers fosters a collaborative approach to support children's development. Sharing observations, progress and concerns ensures consistency between home and professional settings. This will then lead to benefiting the child's growth, (S.C.W, 2019). Relating this topic to safeguarding and overall safety of a child, effective communication allows opportunity for identifying and addressing concerns regarding a child and their safety. Professionals must be able to listen attentively to children and take their views seriously. This will ensure that, and issues are addressed promptly and abruptly, (NICE, 2009). Children often mirror the behaviour and communication of the adults around them. By demonstrating positive communication and positive interactions, professionals set an example for the children to follow, (S.C.W, 2025).

Having an in-depth knowledge and understanding ensures that professionals can make informed, effective, and ethical decisions. This includes the understanding of child development, legal responsibilities, and safeguarding procedures. Listening to established standards of conduct ensures that professionals act in the best interests of others, maintaining their privacy. This commitment to ethical practice encourages trust and accountability within professional relationships, (hcpc, 2025). Professionals that are trained and have the complete knowledge of developmental milestones and safeguarding are more able to recognise the early signs of a child that needs help. Early identification facilitates timely intervention, which is important for a child's well-being, (NSPCC, 2025). Having a strong understanding of child development and learning approaches helps professionals to create activities and environments that are suitable for each child. This allows for more effective support and planning, (GOV.UK, 2017).

Partnerships and multi-agency working are key components of professional practice because they enhance the effectiveness and quality of services provided.

Collaborating with professionals allows for an effective approach to addressing the needs of individuals. This teamwork ensures that all aspects of a person's well-being are considered, leading to more effective decisions, (C.L, 2024). Partnership working helps maintain a consistent and continuous support for individuals. All involved are on agreement in their objectives and approaches. This consistency is particularly important for vulnerable individuals who may require long-term assistance.

The observation and planning cycle is a necessary process in early years and in education that directly informs professional practice. It helps to ensure that practitioners meet the individual needs of children. Through careful observation,

practitioners can understand what each child enjoys and how they learn best. This helps them to plan activities that suit each child's interests and development stage, leading to more effective and meaningful learning experiences, (GOV.UK,2017). Using children's interest and actions as a guide ensures that learning is relevant and engaging. By planning what children show a curiosity in, practitioners provide experiences that are child focused and motivating. Sharing observations with parents and caregivers allows for a collaborative approach to a child's learning. It allows for families to contribute their insights, thought and feelings. This reinforces the connection between home and educational setting. It also supports consistent development. The observation and planning cycle considers all aspects of a child's development, including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. This approach ensures that all areas are nurtured leading to beneficial development. It also aligns with established educational frameworks, ensuring that teaching practices meet required standards and effectively support children's learning and development. (C.C, 2024). The observation and planning cycle integral to professional practice in early years education. It enables practitioners to provide individualised, responsive, and holistic support to children, creating an enabling environment in which children are engaged to learn.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) serves as a foundational framework for professional practice, notably in areas such as education, social care, healthcare, and law. Its aim is to ensure that all children rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. The UNCRC help to guide practitioners on their day to day with their interactions and decisions, (S.G, 2024). The UNCRC's principles provide professionals with clear guidelines on how to treat children with respect. By embedding these principles into practice, professionals can ensure that their actions align with the international rights human standard. By respecting and putting in place the principles of the UNCRC, professionals can develop inclusive practices that cater to the diverse needs of all children, ensuring that every child receives equal opportunities and support, (G.W,2019). Understanding and applying the UNCRC's principles can help to improve on personal and professional development by encouraging reflective practice and continuous learning, leading to improved outcomes for learners. Professionals who are confident in their knowledge of the UNCRC' principles can influence policy and push for improvements in services that involve and impact children. This helps create a better environment and society where children's rights are upheld. Incorporating the UNCRC into everyday practice helps professionals act in the best interests of children, respect their rights and improve the quality of care and support.

Professional practice is viewed highly in early years settings as it ensures that children receive safe, supportive, and high-quality care. It involves applying knowledge, values, and skills to meet children's needs. Effective communication,

observation, planning, and collaboration are key to supporting development and safeguarding. The UNCRC guide ethical practice and promote inclusion. By staying reflective and informed, professionals can create positive environments for all children.

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