

The Professional Practitioner

Please choose one of the following statements

- a. I can confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I can 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.

Section 1

What do I know already: I already know the fundamentals of what it is to be a good practitioner within a childcare and educational workplace. What have I learnt so far: I have learnt that it is important to continuously be open and eager to learn about new theories and strategies to be a good professional and to ensure that all children's needs are being met.				
What do I want to develop: I would like to develop my knowledge of the new curriculum for Wales (CfW) so I can implement it more effectively in my job. Also, I want to develop my time management and reflective skills and use them effectively in the workplace, university course and in everyday life.				
Objective	Actions	Resources	Target Date for achieving objective:	Success criteria:
<i>Short Term Goal: Manage my time after work more effectively</i>	I will achieve this by using a digital calendar with notifications to remind me of what important things are coming up. I will also make a timetable that is always visual and accessible to create a balance between work, university assignments, social life and my workout routine.	To achieve this objective, I need to download a digital calendar that sends alerts and reminders. I would need time and a laptop to search or create a timetable that is suitable and adaptable for myself. I will be using different apps or storefronts to find the best timetable. Also, I would need the support from my friends and family to understand that my priorities have changed, that I am not as flexible with my	December 2025	I will know my objective has been achieved when I am able to complete all tasks and goals within the deadlines given with little procrastination/distractions. Whilst still having the time to enjoy my hobbies and socialise with family and friends carefree.

		time as I have been previously.		
<i>Medium Term Goal: Improve referencing</i>	I will achieve this through using the feedback from my assignments to refine my academic work. I will stay in contact with my lecturers with any questions I have about referencing I will use books and guides gain more knowledge.	I need open an open line of communication on teams and student email so I am able to receive the feedback from lecturers. Use the harvard refernencing handbook.	July 2026	I will know this is acheived when my referencing are correct on my assignments.
<i>Long Term Goal: To improve my professional practice in my current role and future employment.</i>	To achieve this goal, I need to complete the university course I am currently enrolled on. Attend training courses provided by my school to improve my skills and knowledge. Be open minded about new techniques of teaching and understanding the individual pupil to help them progress further.	I will attend all lectures to ensure I am completing the modules correctly. Use my laptop and access to the online library to do effective research to help me achieve good reflection by putting theory into practice. Manage my time effectively when signing up to attend the further training within my school. Ensuring training days line up with work and university.	July 2027	My long-term goal will be achieved when my work has been completed to a high standard and am able to graduate from university and obtain my degree. I will have the ability to use my knowledge and skills easily in daily life without always needing to refer to books, research or my training. Finally, my goal will be achieved when I am able to

		I will seek out and collaborate with more experienced teachers or agencies to improve my knowledge on different strategies. I will plan more efficiently to make time to work with individual pupils to gain a better understanding of them and how they learn.		help children progress to their fullest potential using a range of techniques and strategies that suit their individual needs.
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Section 2

What is reflection and reflective practice?

Reflection is a process. It allows individuals to think deeply about previous experiences, understand it and be able to make improvements for the future. It is analysing what happened, why things happened and the role of the individual. Through reflection the individual gains a deeper understanding of personal values, self-awareness and principles that could have previously driven the outcome. Once reflecting inwardly, the individual gains a better understanding of the way they work and how to deal with different situations and people which improves future practice.

Reflective practice is using reflection skills within a professional workplace. Practitioners will understand the core values that drive them and have the skills to critically analyse experiences effectively. Allowing practitioners to think outside the box, change techniques and make the best decision to improve work and achieve goals within the setting (Lindon, J, 2016, p. 4-10).

Why is reflective practice important to EY practice?

Reflective practice is important in early years as it helps practitioners have a better understanding of the job. Using existing knowledge and understanding what was successful through reflection will build confidence in the practitioner which encourages practitioners to challenge things and take risks to provide the most enriching learning environment for the children.

By using different reflective models like Gibbs, Kolb's, and Dewey it helps practitioners reflect effectively. The models guide and help practitioners gain a better understanding of what was successful, what was not and how each child learns. This allows practitioners to change the activities or strategy of learning, making it more engaging and suitable to the children, supporting the children's learning and development (Hallet, E, 2012, p. 24-25).

Reflection in early years practice is important as it can increase the success of practitioners bonding with children and families. The practitioner has a deeper understanding of emotions and self-awareness, allowing practitioners to be professional yet empathetic with challenging situations. Having a professional bond with families helps children have a better learning experience as the practitioner will have a deeper understanding of that child through discussions with parents, allowing practitioners to reflect on the information and plan for more unique and suitable activities that support that child's learning and development (Johnston, J, 2018, p. 510-511).

Collaborating with other practitioners and reflecting on practice gives new perspectives on challenges. Through discussion and planning, practitioners can challenge other points of view and ways of thinking and work together to find creative solutions to the challenges. Thus, providing the children with better individualised learning experiences as well as enhancing the practitioner's critical reflection skills (A. Brock (ed), 2015, p. 51-52)

The theory of reflective practice:

John Dewey was the first theorist that introduced reflective learning. Dewey believed that experiences are what shape individuals and identified two types of action. The first is routine action meaning that there are everyday experiences that people do not learn from which involve no deeper thought processes. The second is reflective action meaning that through analysing firsthand experiences on a deeper level, individuals can use the experience to learn and grow professionally (Schulz, T.S, 2025, p. 7).

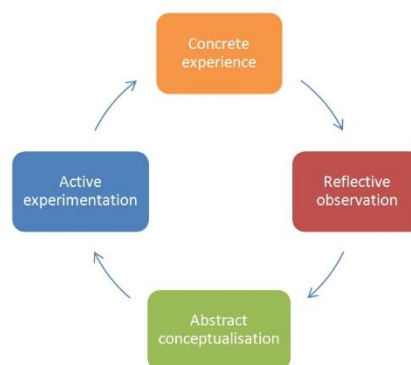
A theorist called Donald Schon built on Dewey's theory but based the theory on professional practice and development and found two distinct types of reflection. The first is reflection in action, this is when a professional uses reflection skills to overcome the challenge as it is happening. The second is called reflection on action, this is when a professional reflects after the event and can put things in place to improve the event next time (Candy, L, 2020, p. 17-18).

Both theories became the fundamentals of reflective practice that have been enhanced and developed by more current theorists to suit current practices.

Gibbs' model



Kolb's model



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

Thompson, C. (2021) suggests that Gibbs' model is a good model to use as it links reflection to action. It encourages professionals to seek out new techniques and think out of the box enabling the professional to continuously adapt the work to find the most effective one. It is an easy model to use for daily reflection encourages professional development. However, Sow, C.-F., Rasiah, S. and Er, H.M. (2025, p. 505) believe that Gibbs model could have a negative impact on individuals emotional state as the model could point out the flaws of the professional. When using it to review an experience the individual might only see the negative qualities and struggle to develop further.

Gibbs' six stage model is considered effective as it is easy to follow through being clearly labelled with what aspects need to be reflected on and how to begin. However, Johnston, J (2018, p. 471) believes that Kolb's model is a less effective model as it focuses on how learning and reflection work together and does not guide the user on what reflection is or how to use it effectively in work.

Vince, R (2022, p. 985) believes using Kolb's model is very effective in encouraging personal and professional development as it encourages active learning and problem solving. Even though Sow, C.-F., Rasiah, S. and Er, H.M. (2025, p. 505) points out similar positives of using the Kolbs model it does state that due to the lack of steps and clarity of the model it is difficult to apply this model of reflection to more complex experiences. Learners may not understand exactly what aspects of the experience they need to be reflecting on therefore not finding the right solution to the problem.

Conclusion

In conclusion reflection is essential in learning and for professional development. Reflection is about analysing experiences and improving on future practice. To analyse experience learners must begin with reflective models to help understand what reflection is. The models then give guidance on how to think deeper and use reflection in a positive way to develop skills and future practice.

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Section 3

Written Essay

It is important to recognise the several aspects in professional practice that impact children's lives and why it is important to meet all the individual needs of children. To begin it is useful to understand what a professional is and what is professional practice. A professional is not defined by any one thing. A professional is seen as an individual who has experience, a range of skills and extensive knowledge in a specific field or occupation and uses these to have good proficiency in daily work (C. Solvason & R. Webb, eds, 2023, p. 8).

Professional practice is all about reflecting on skills and knowledge to encourage continuous development in practice. Professional practice is about self-reflecting, to understand personal beliefs and values and ensuring that these are always upheld in daily practice. Practitioners use personal beliefs and values to ensure the right action is taken (Admin, no date).

Values are important and help mould and guide practitioners into the best professional version of themselves. Helping practitioners understand what is right and wrong, and support practitioners with how to handle challenges, how to make ethical decisions ensuring fairness and equality. Knowing core values and sense of self ensures good collaboration with others. Practitioners can ensure that personal behaviour is professional, even in disagreements and ensure the best possible decision is made and have a positive impact on the child. Values encourage practitioners to expand the mind and not see children in a limited way but as a whole person, to understand individual needs and find new strategies and techniques to help the child develop. Practitioners acknowledge the importance of safeguarding and through using core values can ensure that there is consistency in actions taken to ensure the best support is given to help children thrive (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021).

It is important that practitioners have strong values to create a positive, supportive, and enriching learning environment for all children. Powell, S. (2010, p. 215) believes that practitioners should have a core value of wanting to work with children, having the passion to help children grow and develop. The passion for working with children leads to practitioners having a joyful approach to teaching, making learning fun and

enjoyable which empowers children to 'want' to learn as well as providing a positive learning environment, aiding development. Every child is different and the drive to support children and make a difference in their lives, encourages practitioners look for new strategies, make commitments to new training opportunities and change the setting to always ensure a stimulating and enriching learning environment.

Continuously enhancing personal development.

Mosher, R (2024) believes having an understanding nature, being kind, having empathy, and patience is important in professional practice as these values enhance the bond between practitioner and child. Practitioners that have trusting qualities encourages children to talk, being open and honest without feeling judged which strengthens the bond between the practitioner and child. Using core values such as patience and kindness helps children feel safe, creating a positive environment in the setting for that child.

Communication is essential to form bonds with children and families. Through communication and core values trust, honesty and respect can be built and from this a professional relationship will form between the practitioner, family, and potentially other professionals. A relationship between parents and practitioners opens a pathway of information and support not only for the child but for the family. Through the trust-built, parents will communicate more about the challenges that are affecting the family. Sharing personal information and admitting that help is needed is difficult for adults to admit, so it is important that practitioners listen, have good eye contact, positive body language for parents to feel safe and comfortable when sharing personal information. Practitioners can reflect on the information shared and provide the best support for the family and child, which could be referring to other agencies, linking to parent groups or modelling effective strategies (Wilson, T, 2025, p. 13-14).

Wilson, T. (2025, pp 19-20) also suggests that having effective relationships with parents and the children practitioners gain a deeper understanding of the child, the child's background and extenuating factors that are influencing the child's development. Through the information shared and observed practitioners reflect, identify, and implement the most suitable support strategies. Communication is not only through discussion for non-verbal children it is shown through eye contact, body language and movements, facial expressions, and sounds. This means it is

important for a relationship to build between the child and practitioner for the practitioner to get a deeper understanding of the child, how the child communicates and learn how to effectively communicate back. Observing the children to see if their reaction is positive or negative gives practitioners a starting point on how to provide support. Practitioners will use knowledge and seek new techniques to plan more unique and suitable activities to support the child's learning and development.

Having in-depth knowledge and understanding the importance of a role is essential to professional practice as it ensures the safety of children and helps children thrive. Practitioners have extensive knowledge about the curriculum, policies, procedures and effectively use techniques to ensure the safety, well-being, and development of every child in daily practice. With in-depth knowledge practitioners will take the initiative in professional practice to seek new strategies and change the environment to ensure all children's needs are supported and all children reach their highest potential. Safeguarding is an aspect of professional practice, and it is the duty of a practitioner to ensure the safety of the child. If the child shows signs of abuse, neglect or discusses being unsafe the practitioner will be aware of the procedures to follow and take the correct steps to ensure the safety of the child outside of the setting (Office For Standards in Educations, Children's Services and Skills {Ofsted} 2023).

Partnership and multi-agency working is important to professional practice as it provides a holistic approach that ensures the child's safety and development. Working with a range of professionals ensures support is given in different aspects of the child's life such as emotional, physical, educational, and social. The range of professional's work as a team bringing individual expertise knowledge to create a plan of action and intervene early in the child's life to ensure the child's well-being. Collaboration between professionals can build relationships of trust and by having that strong networking team it creates a supportive and positive environment for both families and children. It is vital to have effective communication in partnerships and that all professionals are dependable to ensure the best life for the child. One professional not on track impacts the child's life greatly and could lead to dangerous circumstances (Johnston, J, 2018, p. 505).

Observations are essential when working with children. The Welsh Government (2022) suggests that through observing practitioners can see what motivates children, how the children build relationships, what interests the children, what skills and knowledge the children have and use all the information collected as a starting point to plan activities for further development.

It is important that practitioners have an in-depth understanding of the curriculum in Wales as well as the UNCRC. Both documents are important to professional practice because the documents ensure a child centred approach. Supporting and encouraging children to learn through continuous experience and having opportunities to make mistakes and have room to grow. Practitioners use these guides as part of planning to ensure continuous activities throughout the day and that children are always developing skills and knowledge through the experiences planned. Whilst planning practitioners continuously enhance the provision through observation. Observing the engagement of children as well as listening to children's ideas and interests, changes are made to the provision ensuring it is always stimulating and engaging to promote growth, curiosity and meet the individual needs of children. Promoting article 12 of the UNCRC. As well as planning continuous provision practitioners also plan focused tasks for children such as maths and language to teach new essential skills and knowledge that will continuously develop throughout education and life. Promoting article 28 of the UNCRC - every child has a right to learn and to an education. Continuous observation and planning are important to ensure all the children's needs are supported as the children develop throughout life (Welsh Government, 2022).

Welsh Government (2019) states that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is important documentation that establishes all children have the same rights no matter what. The UNCRC highlights that children should be supported, protected, and have rights to learn, play, grow, and thrive. In Wales, the government incorporated children's rights into the curriculum, ensuring that children's rights are the key elements within the documentation and that children are made aware of rights throughout education in learning and play. Practitioners should be aware of these documents and have a good understanding of how to incorporate both into planning and learning.

In conclusion, knowledge and values are central to professional practice and having a deep understanding of both ensures that all children's needs are met. It is important that practitioners provide a safe, rich learning environment that challenge children as well as supports each child's skills, needs and development. Ensuring children have the best quality of life.

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