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ECEY4009 Professional Practitioner Portfolio.

I have not used AI within this portfolio.

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No	Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?	Achievements (3 monthly review)
1	Safeguarding Level 3	Successfully attended Safeguarding level 3 course run by the Local Authority and received a certificate.	Book myself onto the course after speaking to the headteacher to ensure I am able to be released from school on that day.	By the end of the school year 2024/2025.	I will gain a deeper understanding of safeguarding and the legal framework around safeguarding. Level 3 safeguarding will support me when I stand in for the Family Liaison Manager in meetings such as core groups with external agencies, the safeguarding training will help me gain confidence when scaling families in these meetings.	
2	Gain more understanding- Challenging behaviours within the classroom setting.	Attend training run by specialist behaviour support teachers withing the local authority.	Speak to the headteacher to ensure they are able to release me on the date of training and ask the ALNCO to book myself on the training de-escalating challenging behaviours in the classroom.	By the end of autumn term, December 2024.	I will gain further understanding and I will be able to add strategies to my tool kit when supporting a child who is dysregulated, to protect them from hurting themselves and others. It will help me support staff within my setting to gain understanding and share new strategies.	
3	First Aid training	Successfully attended and passed the one-day training and received the qualification via a certificate. I will be qualified to conduct first aid within my educational setting and a picture of myself will be added to the first aid displays throughout the school.	Ensure the headteacher will release me to attend the training once this has been agreed ask the office staff to book myself onto the next available training date.	Spring Term- April 2025.	A first aid qualification will help me to ensure I am able to confidently look after pupils and adults in a medical emergency while protecting myself.	

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No	Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?	Achievements (3 monthly review)
4	Family Wellbeing Event	Successfully hold a wellbeing event targeting families of our pupils while linking with the wider community.	Meet with the Local Area Coordinator to start planning the event. Design posters to advertise to parents, families, and the wider community. Link in with external agencies to attend the event.	Autumn term- December 2024.	Organizing a family wellbeing event will provide an opportunity for me to build my confidence while providing an experience for the children and their families. This event will help me to strengthen my relationships with the pupils, families, and wider community. By holding a wellbeing event not only will I build my relationships and make new connections with external agencies, but it also provides parents and families the opportunities to start building a trust with external agencies.	

I am currently working as the Wellbeing Officer in my educational environment while in my first year of completing my degree in Early Years.

My aspiration for the future is to become a Wellbeing Advisor for the South Wales Police Force. I am confident that my PDP will support me in gaining relevant professional skills while building my confidence and relationships with external agencies, so I am able to achieve this aspiration.

What is reflection and reflective practice?

The term reflection can be traced back to Greek philosophers. The core values of professionals are reflection and reflective practice. With many professionals, especially in education and health and social care, there is a demand to reflect on their practice and this is a non-negotiable in their practice and job roles. Reflection and reflective practice also support professionals in developing (Moon, 2004). When professionals use the term reflective practice it refers to that process where practice is analyzed and examined. For reflective practice to be carried out successfully a professional's practice needs to be challenged, changed and developed so they are able to successfully improve their practice and continuous development (Pacey, 2016). The key components that make up the reflective practice process include:

- **Learn - Empowerment**
- **Think – Self-Improvement**
- **Experience- Self-awareness**

(University of Hull, 19th January 2024)

Collaborative reflection provides practitioners an opportunity to come together as a group regardless of their level to plan, deliver, observe, and evaluate a lesson. This form of reflection refers to a deeper level of critical thinking (Durham, University, no date).

Why is reflective practice important to EY practice?

Working in Early Years practitioners need to ensure that they are executing reflective practice. There is an increased importance on practitioners to execute reflective practice in their everyday role as the environment is continuously changing. Practitioners working in Early Years are required to have a range of skills to support their reflective practice, these include having a sensitive approach. This is in order for practitioners to be able to be successful when developing new ways for a multi professional approach (Smith and Craft, 2011). Reflective practice is important for Early Years practitioners as it:

- Supports practitioners to develop confidence.
- Practitioners are able to develop essential critical understanding skills which will support practitioners to understand their practice.
- Enable practitioners to be more proactive rather than reactive.
- Improves the delivery and education to children and families.
- Provides excellent care to children and families.
- Practitioners are able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Gives practitioners the opportunity to focus on strengths and weaknesses for areas of improvement.

(Brithto5matters,2021).

Finally, it is critical for practitioners to show reflective practice as provision within the setting will be improved. It will also support practitioners when informed decisions need to be made regarding if their practice is showing to be effective or inadequate (Brookfield, 1995).

The theory reflective practice

The term reflective practice and being a reflective practitioner refers to how professionals think. According to Schon the theory of reflection can be broken down into two processes. There are reflection **IN** practice and reflection **ON** practice. According to the theory of reflection when Early Years Practitioners reflect on their practice while conducting an activity or provision, this is known as reflection **IN** practice. Where when an early year's practitioner reflects **ON** their practice after they have conducted the activity or provision this takes their process and thinking to a higher level. This then supports Early Years Practitioners to link practice with theories (Schon, 2007). John Dewey a key pioneer when referring to theories related to reflective practice and reflective practitioners still has a crucial relevant impact on educational practitioners. Dewey believed that practitioners needed to develop skills where they were able to think productively and successfully while ensuring they were able to get into a routine of reflecting on their practice purposefully. Dewey's theories has a larger concept than Schon's. Dewey's include: - thinking, problem solving, open mindedness, underlying beliefs, an active and deliberate process, sequences of interconnected ideas, reasoning and ordering of thoughts. Dewey was a firm believer that practitioners were able to add an extra depth to their thought process through reflection (E. Hallet, 2013).

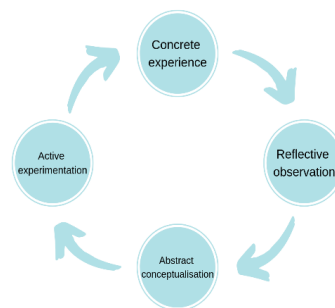
Gibbs' Model

(Source- University of Edinburgh, 11th November 2020).



Kolbs' Model

(Source- University of Cambridge, no date).



Analysis of models

Gibbs model of reflective practice is a structured model which Gibb's developed as a continuous cycle. Gibb's model of reflective practice puts a focus on the importance of feelings while separating evaluation. This model of reflective practice is a very practical way of conducting reflection and it has many strengths but there are also weaknesses. Due to the steps being broken down into a step by step process it is easy for practitioners to follow and understand. It provides them with an opportunity to develop their reflection and then to put their understanding back into their practice. Having acknowledgment on the importance of feelings it supports practitioners to understand their emotional wellbeing. This gives practitioners an opportunity to understand and process their feelings and to be able to have the opportunity to look after their emotional wellbeing. However, due to it being so structured there is no freedom in the model and due to having so many steps to follow it is time consuming. Kolb's model of reflective practice has more weaknesses than strengths. The model provides practitioners with the opportunity to develop their growth through not only theory but through their practice. Kolb's model of reflective practice focuses on practitioners reflecting on their provision and practice and looking at what went well and what did not go well. This gives practitioners an opportunity to change their practice and apply learning to situations. When analysis the models the main difference between them is how their stages are formed (Sethmini, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion reflective practice serves an acquired core value in personal and professional development for practitioners working in not only Early Years but in all educational fields. Practitioners engaging in reflection supports development in essential critical thinking skills and being able to problem solve effectively. By practitioners getting into a routine of reflecting on their practice this supports them understanding their practice and why they do things the way they do. Reflective practice in Early Years not only enhances their knowledge but ensures children and families are receiving excellent education and provisions.

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.

The term professionalism has an extensive range of meanings. 'Professionalism' implies to the concept of a person who is intellectual and that puts a higher value of importance on the mind rather than skills that can be developed when working practically (Chalke, 2013).

When a person has extensive experience and knowledge they are referred to as a professional. The literature that relates to professionals is wide-ranging and valuable. A professional is able to construct and deliver effective decisions in critical situations due to their judgment skills. The term professional can be determined by the community and how their view on acceptable practice and values are perceived. Working as a professional provides a sense of responsibility (Dyrud, M.A. 2022).

The Early Year Work Force Commission (2021) and The Early Years Alliance (2021) acknowledge how important Early Years Professionals are when supporting children. Both organisations recognise how Early Years Professionals play a critical part during the first five years of a child's life, which is an essential time for their development. Early Years Professionals support children in their holistic development and academically.

According to Prez (2019) 'professionalism' is underpinned by a practitioner's values. These values then guide practitioners with the skills, knowledge, and ethical standards, which are required for them to execute their roles.

Core values that practitioners display are integrity, social justice, making a professional commitment, while showing trust and respect. For Early Years Professionals values will support the process on building strategies for beyond the classroom while developing a stronger understanding of working with families and agencies.

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With the assistance of values practitioners will be able to support children developing through understanding their needs on an individual basis. This will support practitioners when safeguarding (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021).

Values in Early Years which are vital for practitioners to hold and reflect in their practice include, being able to show excellent communication skills while being able to work in collaboration with all children, care givers and agencies (Powell, 2010).

Communication is considered as a core value for professionals. Communication is a crucial aspect for practitioners to ensure they incorporate in their practice, so they are able to meet the needs of the child. Communication is a fundamental process which is made up from listening, questioning, understanding, and responding to what is being communicated (Dunhill, 2013).

When analysing communication, a principal factor to take into consideration is communication is made up of three parts. Communication is 7% of words, 38% tone and 55% body language (Orey, 2014).

Communication is a recognised skill which practitioners need to show within their practice. When practitioners are communicating effectively with all pupils and stakeholders, they are providing opportunities to build positive relationships. Effective communication will support practitioners when planning for children. This will then contribute to the assessment phase, so they are able to meet the needs of the child (Caldwell, 2015).

Communication with children, parents and agencies supports practitioners when safeguarding. All practitioners have a responsibility for safeguarding. Multi-agencies work together to ensure the safety of all children. These agencies include early years practitioners, teachers, health professionals and social workers.

By effective communication and working in collaboration they are able to share relevant information and concerns from something they noticed regarding the child

or family. Under the Children Act 1989, Social workers may need to issue a 'Section 47' also known as a child protection investigation from the concerns of the professionals to ensure that the child is safe (Haringey Safeguarding Child Protection, no date).

As part of a practitioner's role, they are required to show understanding of professional practice. Practitioners will pay acknowledgement to 'principal practice' which is driven by values and ethics. This form of practice supports children and parents to be at the heart of the practice while the professional works as an advocate to support them. Professionals who are able to combine their practice with theoretical knowledge, understanding the physical, social, and emotional development while acknowledging a child's spiritual and intellectual development are showing 'best practice' (Gasper, 2015).

Practitioners have a responsibility to ensure they understand that under the national legislation Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, that they have a professional duty to report any concerns while also following their settings safeguarding policy.

Professional practice being underpinned by knowledge of safeguarding legislation will support meeting the needs of the child, while providing the child understanding that they are at the heart of all the decisions that are being made about them (Welsh Government, 2020).

If practitioners do not have an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding, they can cause harm to the child or family by failure to provide adequate care (Great Britain Department of Health, 1999).

A critical partnership that professionals need to build on is with the parents. Professionals will experience daily interactions with parent's which can lead to identifying the support they require. Building engaging, positive relationships with

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parents promotes the academic learning and enhances provision as it is suggested that the learning environment at home is just as important as in the setting.

Under the legislation 'Education Act, 1944' acknowledgement has been made to the importance of building relationships while providing parental input to meet the needs of the child (Wilson, 2016).

Practitioners have a responsibility to ensure they have an understanding of the National Minimum Standards (NMS). These standards are in place to ensure quality childcare is being provided. This framework is to support practitioners with an adaptable approach which can be tailored to meet the needs of the child (Welsh Government, 2023).

While it is important for practitioners to ensure they have an in-depth knowledge of standards, they will be observed by agencies to ensure they are meeting these standards and incorporating them in their practice.

Care Inspector Wales (CIW) will provide support and observe a multitude of sectors under social services. Their main aims are made up from ensuring that all services are providing a service that is in line with legislative and legally mandatory requirements, while providing strategies and adjustments needed to make improvement. The CIW will conduct these observations while ensure they practice their core values which are caring, fair, integrity, professional and respectful (Care Inspector Wales, no date).

Practitioners need to all ensure that they are observing pupils, so they are aware of their needs. Settings will follow the Curriculum for Wales Framework- The Four Purposes. This framework is based on ensuring that learners are taught the essential skills required to become ethically informed citizens, ambitious capable learners, enterprising creative contributors, and healthy confident individuals.

Practitioners will provide provision for learners to develop these skills through teaching them in many ways. This framework will support practitioners to provide extra provision for children to support their needs. Practitioners following the framework will allow them to deliver an experience to the learners where they are thriving (HWB, 2022).

By practitioners conducting regular observations and assessments they are able to identify a child's strengths and weakness, this will support them when passing on information. Observation and assessments allow professionals to gain understanding of their developments and abilities across the curriculum while identifying their interests and building relationships (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning Skills, no date).

Article 28 of the UNCRC states that every child is entitled to an education (UNICEF, no date).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was formed in 1923. The UNCRC is an agreement which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The UNCRC puts focus on every child regardless of their race, religion, or abilities (Save the Children, no date).

Practitioners need to ensure that they are aware of the 54 articles in the UNCRC while understanding that no right is more important than another (unicef.org no date). Set out in the UNCRC are four key articles which set out the basis. These articles are, right to non-discrimination (article 2), commitment to the best interests of the child (article 3), right to life, survival, and development (article 6) and right to be heard (article 12) (Gov.wales 2022)

This legislation recognises the importance of the child's voice being heard and that they are receiving the protection while being empowered. The UNCRC is an important part of practice as it provides children with additional human rights (Welsh Government, 2019).

Professionals working in the Early Years reflect their knowledge and expertise in their everyday practice. Early Years Professionals are often faced with challenging and exhausting environments. By professionals using their expertise they are able to ensure they are meeting the needs of the child, while ensuring that the child is the priority and being safeguarded (Hyson and Tomlinson, 2014).

To summarise this essay has thoroughly explored professionals while providing relevant, reliable sources on the importance of professional practice. There has been a consideration made of the importance of professionals having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, UNCRC and working in partnership with multi-agencies. This essay has recognised the importance of effective communication professionals need to hold as one of their values to ensure they meet the needs of the child. To conclude there has been acknowledgement to the framework which settings need to comply with while understanding what agencies will observe them as practitioners.

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