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

Part 1: Personal Development Plan

Objective	Actions	Resources	Target Date	Success Criteria
I would like to increase my Welsh language ability, to be able to speak, write and read every day Welsh words and phrases. This is my goal because the Welsh language is used every day in school settings, and I would like to be able to support the children in my placement with their own Welsh language ability. By learning Welsh, I would have also increased my employability as many settings would like employees to have this ability.	To achieve this goal, I will take the university's course for learning the Welsh language. I have signed up for this course and it starts in September 2025. This course will take the academic year to complete.	This course is self-study along with monthly revision sessions with the courses tutor and the group. Resources are given in each module to support self-study. If I was to need additional support if I was having difficulty with the module, I could contact my tutor.	I would like to achieve this goal by the 1st of September 2026. This is a realistic date to achieve this goal as it is a year after I had started the course, so I will have completed the course by then.	I will know I have achieved this goal as I would be able to speak, read and write basic Welsh phrases and will be able to support children in my placement if they ask questions about the phrases we use every day in the nursery. I will also receive a certificate at the end of the course, which will confirm that I have completed the course. After succeeding with this goal, I would like to become more advanced in the Welsh Language by signing up to the next level of the Welsh course.
I would like to expand my knowledge on additional learning needs. This is my goal as I have done some research relating to play and children with ASD but would like to further expand my knowledge. I would also like to understand myself better, due to my recent ASD diagnosis, as well be able to support the children in my placement who have additional learning needs.	To achieve this goal, I will read ahead to the Level 6 module reading list to increase my knowledge on supporting children with additional learning needs. I will also do my own research on google scholar and the universities library.	The resources to increase my knowledge on additional learning needs are the books and journals provided in the reading list of the level 6 module 'supporting children with additional learning needs'. If I need more support, I can reach out to my lecturer.	I would like to achieve this goal by the 1s of September 2025. I would like to increase my knowledge over the summer holidays in order to return to my placement setting in September with my increased knowledge.	I will know that I have achieved this goal as I would understand additional learning needs such as ASD better. I will understand myself better and will know how to support the children in my placement setting. After succeeding with this goal, I would like to increase my knowledge in other additional learning needs such as dyslexia and ADHD.

Part 2: Briefing Paper on the importance of reflective practice in EY practice

What is reflection and reflective practice?

According to Brodie (2016), reflective practice is when a practitioner thinks about and analyses their practice within the early years, with the goal of professional development. This is supported by Brock (2015), who states that reflective practice is a core value of professional practice in the early years and should have a key role in the training of practitioners. In fact, the University of Reading (2025) states that this cycle of reflection should be continuous in practice.

Why is reflective practice important to EY practice?

Reflective practice is an essential part of the ongoing learning of an early years practitioner (Play Wales, 2023). This is supported by Hallet (2013) and Brock (2015), who state that reflective practice is important in the early years practice in order to implement policy into practice, especially within the developing early years policy in Wales. Reflection allows practitioners to develop and lead their settings provision and ensure that high quality play and learning is taking place (Hallet, 2013; Welsh Government, 2023a). In fact, the importance of reflection is highlighted in Welsh Government Policy. According to the Welsh Government (2023a), taking time to reflect on the quality of settings allows practitioners to improve the outcomes for children. For example, by reflecting on the way that the practitioner is teaching young children the beginnings of mathematics, such as the numbers one to five, it can be seen if it is being taught effectively or if more support is needed for the children to thrive. This is supported by Craft and Paige-Smith (2011), who state that adults who are responsible for the learning and development of young children should allow space for ideas and possibilities to emerge.

The theory of reflective practice

Schön's (2016) reflective model suggests that there are two parts of reflection: reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action. Comer (2016) refers to reflection *in* action as the intuitive knowing that enables the practitioner to be hands on and enable a skilful performance. This means that the practitioner is reflecting as the event is taking place. The practitioner reflects in the situation and acts immediately. This is supported by Schön (1987), who states that "competent practitioners usually know more than they can say". In contrast, reflection *on* action refers to reconstructing the event afterwards, to be reflective (Edwards, 2017). This means that the practitioner is reflecting after the event takes place. Therefore, the practitioner reflects on the situation afterwards and decides what needs changing and improving in future situations.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

According to the University of Edinburgh (2024), Gibbs' Reflective Cycle was developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988 and is a six stage framework which examines situations which take place and allows those who use it, the place to learn from it. The first stage is the description. This refers to describing what has happened in the situation (University of Cumbria, 2020). The second stage is feelings, which refers to what emotions and thoughts were taking place in the situation (University of Edinburgh, 2024). The third stage evaluation refers to the practitioner thinking about what went well in the situation and what went poorly (University of Edinburgh, 2024). The fourth stage is the analysis. This is where the practitioner makes sense of what happened in the situation and uses theory to explain why something happened (University of Cumbria, 2020). The fifth stage is the conclusion, which refers to what the practitioner has learnt from the event (University of Cumbria, 2020). The final stage is the action plan. This refers to what the practitioner is going to do better going forward to improve the outcome next time. (University of Edinburgh, 2024).

(Source: SimplyPsychology, 2025).

While an advantage of Gibbs' reflective cycle is that the practitioner can reflect in detail about what has taken place in their setting, a disadvantage of this model of reflection is that it can take a lot of time to do, which practitioners do not have the time in the day to take out.

Driscoll's Model of Reflection

Driscoll developed a model of reflection in 1994, based on the three simple questions, originally asked by Terry Borton (University of Edinburgh, 2024). These three questions are: 'What?', 'So What?' and 'Now What?' (University of Edinburgh, 2024). By asking these three questions, practitioners can analyse and learn from their experiences in practice. Driscoll's Model of Reflection starts with 'What?', which means that the situation should be described (University of Cambridge, n.d.). This gives the practitioner a clear idea of what they are dealing with (University of Cambridge, n.d.). The next stage of this model is 'So What?', which allows the practitioner to reflect on what happened and how they resolved the situation (University of Edinburgh, 2024; University of Cambridge, n.d.). Finally, the third stage of this model is 'Now What?', which allows the practitioner to reflect on the action they took, and what they can change next time (University of Cambridge, n.d.).

(Source: NursingAnswers, 2024).

An advantage of Driscoll's model is that unlike Gibbs' cycle, it is short and precise, meaning that practitioners can understand it more easily. Another advantage is that as it is a shorter cycle, with less stages, it would not take as much time to compared to Gibbs'. However, a disadvantage of the Driscoll model is that as it has fewer stages, compared to Gibbs', the practitioner may not put enough detail in their model for improvement to take place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, reflection is an important part of early years practice. Reflection is clearly an important part of practice as it is now a part of the early years framework in Wales, particularly in improving the outcomes for children (Welsh Government, 2023a). Schön states that there are two types of reflection, reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action, which refers to reflection in the experience and reflection outside of the experience (Comer, 2016; Edwards, 2017). While Gibbs and Driscoll's models are different, practitioners should take either on board to develop their professional development (Brock, 2016).

Part 3: Written Essay analysing the significance of different aspects of professional practice

There are many differing views on what being a professional refers to. While in some contexts, a professional refers to those with qualifications, there is a greater understanding of the value of the qualities that an individual brings to practice with or without qualifications in the early years (Gasper, 2015). In fact, McGillivray (2008) points out that traditional ideology on qualifications all contribute to the idea of professionalism. However, Perez (2019) states that professionalism is dependent on the values which influence the skills and knowledge that are required to perform in practice.

There are many values which are important in professional practice. In fact, the early years framework for Wales highlights the values that are crucial in practice (Social Care Wales, 2018). One value that is pivotal in the early years is promoting the importance of a child's family, as well as supporting the development of these relationships, in the best interest of the child (Social Care Wales, 2018). This is supported by Powell (2010), who states that an important value in the early years is the ability to have good communication and have the ability to work well with parents/carers. Another value which is important in early years practice is having a genuine interest in the development of children (Powell, 2010). This is supported by Social Care Wales (2018), which states that a key value in the early years practice is supporting the development of the skills and confidence of children that will prepare them for transitions in later life. These values are important in professional practice and help practitioners to develop the whole child through addressing their individual needs, as well as developing the understanding of the role of a practitioner through their role in collaborative working with a range of partners, including families and services (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021).

Communication is crucial in early years and involves listening, understanding and responding to what is being said by the children and the people caring for them (Dunhill, 2009; City & Guilds and WJEC, 2019a). This is an important part of professional practice as a practitioner needs to effectively communicate with children, parents/carers, colleagues and other service providers (City & Guilds and WJEC, 2019a). This is supported by Dunhill (2009), who states that communication

is a central and fundamental part of working with children and their families. The importance of communication is established in the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings, which states that practitioners have the responsibility to communicate with the child's home and make strong connections in order to strengthen their sense of belonging (Welsh Government, 2022).

Another important part of professional practice is building positive relationships between practitioners, children and their families, as well as other professionals (Powell, 2010). This is supported by the Department for Education (2021), who believe that working in partnership with parents and carers is a central part of the early years. This importance is highlighted in the curriculum, which states that by building the relationship between the setting and home, the child's wellbeing and development is nurtured (Welsh Government, 2022). The curriculum also states that by the parents and carers recognising the child's educator and valuing their skills, it can help build a smooth transition for the child from the home to setting, as well as supporting the ongoing partnership between the family and practitioner (Welsh Government, 2022).

According to Social Care Wales (2025), practitioners need to have the knowledge and understanding of their role as a practitioner for the safety and welfare of the children they care for. The importance of this is highlighted by HM Government (2018), who state that children who need help, deserve the highest quality of support as soon as the need is identified. Therefore, practitioners have the responsibility to know what is required of them individually, as well as working in partnership with others (HM Government, 2018).

Practitioners need to have the knowledge of the signs of abuse in order to provide early intervention. As defined in section 31(9) of the Act (Children Act 1989), harm refers to the ill-treatment of health or development of a child, either as a result of a direct act, or failure to provide proper care. This is supported by the NSPCC (2025) who state that the types of harm that children can face include neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. By practitioners offering early help to vulnerable children and their families, they are assisting in the prevention of future harm (Welsh Government, 2020). Early intervention is important as the child's wellbeing can be improved as well as their development later in life (NSPCC, 2023a). Therefore,

practitioners need to know who their Designated Safeguarding Person is for their setting (Welsh Government, 2020). Additionally, practitioners need to be familiar with the safeguarding policy in their setting, as well as safeguarding acts. For example, the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020, which abolishes corporal punishment of a child in Wales (Welsh Government, 2023b).

The importance of safeguarding is shown in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is a legally binding agreement signed by 196 countries which outlines the rights of every child (UNICEF, n.d.). According to the Welsh Government (2020), The UNCRC ensures that every child has the right to be safe and happy. Article 19 is important, as it ensures that governments must protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect (UNICEF, n.d.). Therefore, the UNCRC informs professionals of the importance of safeguarding within early years practice.

The principles of the UNCRC also informs professional practice on the importance of respecting the views of children. This is shown in Article 12 which states that every child has the right to express their views in all matters that affect them and should be considered seriously (UNICEF, n.d.). Article 12 is also important when planning activities for the children in the setting. By the practitioner knowing what the children are interested in, learning can be enhanced through continuous, enhanced and focused activities that reflect on the children's interests (Welsh Government, 2016). An enhanced activity means that by the practitioner observing the children, they can understand what the children are interested in and can add resources to the setting available to meet the theme that they are interested in (Children's Commissioner for Wales, n.d.; Louis, 2022). For example, a sand pit can be turned into the moon for children to teach children who are interested in space. Therefore, enhanced activity of this type promotes Article 12 and is meeting the needs of children.

Continuous provisions can include a sand pit, water area and home corner. Every child has the right to play, so knowing what the children are interested in, is important for their continuous learning through the medium of play (UNICEF, n.d.). A focused provision is a planned activity that is set up to teach a new skill, such as numeracy to children (Estyn, 2017). Therefore, this planning cycle of continuous,

enhanced and focused activities ensures that professionals are meeting the needs of children and fulfilling Article 28 of the UNCRC in the right of education for all children. This is supported by the curriculum, which states that a practitioner's role in observations is to plan experiences that are relevant to children's interests (Welsh Government, 2022). This is why observations are important in ensuring that practitioners are meeting the needs of children.

Multi-agency refers to the child's setting working closely with other service providers, such as social services, to meet the needs of children and their families (City & Guilds and WJEC, 2019b). The Welsh Government is striving towards all schools in Wales becoming Community Focused Schools, which builds strong partnerships with families and other service providers (Welsh Government, 2025a). This is a goal of theirs as multi-agency working is a key part to professional practice, particularly regarding child protection and safeguarding (Department for Education, 2016). In fact, the NSPCC (2023b) state that all practitioners have the responsibility to work effectively in partnership in order to share any information on a child's welfare as soon as possible. Partnership working also increases the quality of education that a child receives, as well as support the holistic development of all children in the practitioners care (Welsh Government, 2025a).

Multi-agency working has become a central part of policy in Wales. This is important as the Government has recognised that the outcomes and experiences of children in Wales need improving, focusing on early intervention and prevention (Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2021). In fact, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 focuses on regional partnership arrangements, to improve the outcomes and well-being of children, as well as improve the efficiency of the multi-agency partnerships (Welsh Government, 2025b). Regional Safeguarding boards were also established under this act, to effectively promote multi-agency support for all children (Welsh Government, 2025b).

In conclusion, in early years practice, there is a great emphasis on the values and qualities that an individual brings to their setting (Gasper, 2015; Perez, 2019). Practitioners need to have knowledge on safeguarding procedures in their setting and be able to report their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Person (Welsh Government, 2020). This is important as early interventions can support the

wellbeing and development of the child (NSPCC, 2023a). The importance of safeguarding in professional practice is highlighted in the UNCRC, particularly in Article 19. In regard to the importance of safeguarding, the Department for Education (2016) also state partnership and multi-agency working is also a key part of professional practice. In professional practice, the relationship between the home and setting is highlighted in the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. Therefore, practitioners must communicate effectively with the child's parents/carers in order to nurture the child's development, wellbeing and sense of belonging (Welsh Government, 2022). Overall, an early years practitioner must be aware of all the relevant legislation to improve their professional practice.

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