Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

Study Skills Portfolio

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.

Section 1 – PDP

What do I know already: working at a level 4 higher level teaching assistant as a 1:1 support. What have I learnt so far: different communication skills with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)				
What do I want to develop: further my academic skills, time management skills, further understanding of safeguarding procedures				
Objective	Actions (How will I achieve this objective/ what needs to be done?)	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?)
Read one book for pleasure and one book regarding my studies.	Check the module reading list to select the required book. Use time management skills to set aside time to read for pleasure.	Create a time management schedule setting out sufficient time and locations without any interruptions.	I will aim to read 1 book for pleasure and one book regarding my studies per week.	By finishing the books. By gaining knowledge and understanding. I can change the time management schedule to suit my goal.
Complete my degree to achieve a minimum of a 2:1 result.	Set sufficient study time. Use moodle to get the required information. Set time goals to ensure I'm meeting targets.	Look at the marking strategy to see how to improve. Consult reading list to further my knowledge and understanding.	By July 2027	Consulting module feedback scores to see where improvements can be made. Setting sufficent time to plan my work.

				Review feedback from lecturers to improve my result for next time.
Qualify as a teacher and become a literacy subject lead.	Complete degree. Complete PGCE. Read appropriate literature. Peer/mentor support.	Attending courses to enable me to have further insight into becoming a subject leader. Access to relevant knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for Wales.	At the end of the course, complete a PGCE by 2029.	Getting a degree. Achieving PGCE status. Knowledge and understanding of literature. Becoming literacy leads at a school. Review by delivering to children and gaining understanding.

Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

Section 2 – Briefing Paper

What is reflection and reflective practice?	Why is reflective practice important to EY practice?
There can be many different contexts as to the description of reflection, however Clarà (2014) argues that reflection is a descriptive notion rather than a prescriptive one, meaning that it gives clarity to what has been a more unclear situation and how to change it for the next time. The concept of reflective practice was defined by Dewey (1933) as looking back on an issue and evaluating it seriously to make improvements. Brock (2015) suggests reflection and reflective practice are fundamental principles upheld by professionals and play a pivotal role in their training. To be effective, reflection must be purposeful, contextually relevant, and directly connected to their professional experiences. In addition, reflection is an essential part of learning as a professional and can be associated with being receptive to innovative ideas, acknowledging and accepting responsibility and having continuous vigilance in situations that arise. (Lindon, 2016, p.1). Additionally, reflective practice is underpinned by what you do and how you do it, considering the reasons for the choices you have made over other options available to you and using this as a priority or principle.	Reflective practice is an essential component of working within the Early Years. It is an expectation to reflect on practice in a variety of ways to amplify professional development. The practice of reflection is becoming more firmly embedded in the practitioners involved with young people's learning and development. (Craft & Paige-Smith, 2011, p.15) It is also important to note that Early Years practitioners at all levels need to be responsible for developing their practice by continuous professional development and be willing to be consistently learning to enhance their lifelong learning. Through this approach there is a responsibility for creating positive outcomes and experiences for children and young people. (Lindon, 2016, p. 4) Reflective practice in the Early Years can encourage practitioners how to work with children and young people by having more of an emphasis on the delivery of their learning in their settings. Craft (2011) discusses the four P's being plurality, possibilities, playfulness, and participation. This approach signals they need for Early Years practitioners to actively reflect on the response and change for Early Years

Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

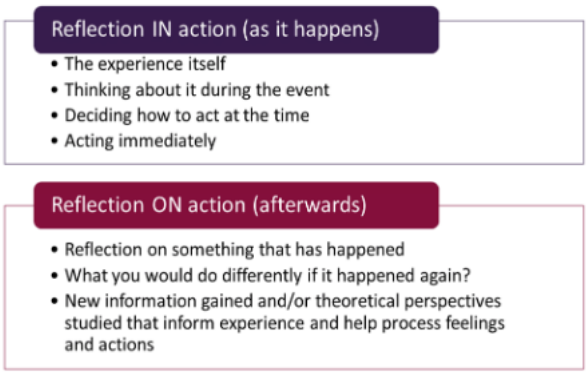
settings and how to positively impact the nature of childhood for children and young people.

The theory of reflective practice:

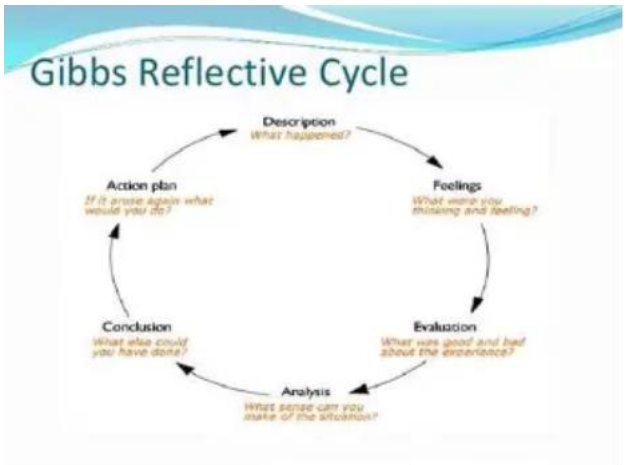
The importance of practitioners to reflect is essential to the development of the practitioners themselves and inevitably the children they support. Their continuous professional development and education should include the prospect of deepening their understanding of values and how to present them in their professional practice. (Hallet, 2013, p. 103)

Two theories discussed by Argyris and Schön are the ‘espoused theory’, cementing the idea that people believe they base their behaviour on values and ideas. Also, the ‘theory-in-use' which strongly implies the way professionals behave in practice by observing their daily routine can have merit to reflective practice. (Lindon, 2016, p. 27) Additionally, it is stated by Thompson (2021) that the concept of espoused theories is something that is more easily recognised by others yet more difficult to see in one’s own reflective practice. Finding a way to incorporate espoused theories and ‘theory-in-use' practice can benefit professional development greatly.

Schön’s Framework



Gibbs’ model



Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

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

Schön's framework demonstrates two structures. Firstly, reflection in action. This occurs during the event, as it happens. The approach relates to thinking on your feet, in real time and this can configure the way issues or problems are addressed immediately. Secondly, reflection on action. This happens after the event has occurred, involving looking back on the event, analysing the actions taken and what could be done differently for the future.

Both reflection in action and reflection on action have merit as it takes into consideration reflecting in real time and post event to gain a wider understanding of reflection. Swartz and Perkins (1989) write about metacognition and define it as, ' the individual reflects upon his or her thinking before and after and even in the middle of the process, pondering how to proceed and how to improve' This suggests that Schön's framework on reflection and metacognitive reflection allow practitioners to manage their own thinking strategies. University of Hull (2024)

Gibbs' model was created to give structure to learning as a more in-depth model which takes into consideration of feelings for reflective practice. It delves further into 6 stages to explore more analysis and conclusion, ending with a plan of action. Gibbs created this model to work through experiences either those that occur only once or those with a more frequent nature. University of Edinburgh (2024)

However, there has been criticism of this model, The Open University (2014) suggests that Gibbs' model does not consider critical thinking on reflection and how different perspectives can lessen the level of more meaningful reflection. Gibbs' model does take into consideration of feelings and how that would impact the way you can reflect on an issue. This is the only model that includes feeling as part of the cycle of reflection.

Conclusion

To summarise, there are a number of reflective models that can be followed and adhered to that encourage reflective thinking and practice, each with their own different styles and models. Each one can be interpreted differently but ultimately, they achieve similar results to gain knowledge and understanding of reflection and personal development. Reflective practice demonstrates its importance for ensuring understanding of critical thinking, different reflective models, and success

in professional development. It can also enrich knowledge, strengthen comprehension of career-related obstacles, and promote imaginative approaches.

Section 3 – Written Essay

A professional can be described in a variety of ways and can have different meanings depending on the context of its description. Gasper (2015) states that for the Early Years it is less easy to define and can be more complex. In the Early Years, there is increased recognition of the significance of practical qualities such as values and ethics, regardless of the formal qualifications they hold. He continues to address that professional practice is more value based, which recognises the needs of the child and their parents to be the practitioner's main focus. When integrating theoretical knowledge and understanding of the child's physical, social, and emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development, these qualities can develop individuals to their fullest professional potential. However, Perez (2019) characterizes a professional to have three values, these being to have specialty training, recognition of standards of practice, and a commitment to provide a service that surpasses the individuals' personal interests. This shows that there can be many multifaceted interpretations of professional practice and what it is to be a professional.

There are many values that would be considered important for professional practice. Values such as awareness, skills, compassion, respect, communication, and patience can all be recognised as important for professional practice. (Powell, 2010). These values are significant for Early Years professional practice as they can grow our professional identity and authentic presence as educators, strengthen and sustain our personal dedication to learners and colleagues through unwavering professional commitment, support our ability to understand and nurture the whole child by responding to their own unique needs and also enhance our awareness of the importance of collaborative partnerships with families, communities and other agencies. (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021). Values are qualities or standards that govern the behaviour and attitude of a person with many of those intertwining to

form principles. These personal principles are based on a person's values and therefore values act as the foundation of principles.

Effective communication comprises of many different skills such as listening, understanding, and responding, each being of equal importance to achieve excellent communication skills. Each skill can follow onto the next, for example, good listening skills are needed to fully understand what it being said and responding efficiently to encourage the person to keep talking. (City & Guilds WJEC, 2023). According to the Department of Education (DoE) (2024), research shows that having parents and carers involvement with their children's learning is one of the most important aspects in helping some children do well at school, regardless of their background. The Welsh Government (2023) adds that the role of the enabling adult is integral to all learners' progress but is especially significant in the Early Years period of learning. Effective communication can also include non-verbal communication such as, eye contact, body positioning, tone, and pitch. Orey (2014) details that only 7 percent of communication are verbal words, 38 percent is comprised of voice tone, modulation and pauses with 55 percent of communication is considered from non-verbal cues such as body movements, posture, and body positioning. This needs to be carefully considered when communicating to ensure that you are an effective communicator. By communicating well and collaborating with parents are carers, you can begin to form a respectful relationship to meet the needs of the children. Children frequently seek physical closeness when communicating with adults so talking to them at their eye level can lead to better engagement and understanding of what is being said. (City & Guilds WJEC 2023)

All practitioners in Wales have safeguarding responsibilities for the children and adults they work with. Practitioners working in Early Years settings and even professionals working in social care, health and police have a direct responsibility to understand safeguarding procedures and its importance to professional practice. The National Safeguarding Procedures set out by the Welsh Government details the roles and responsibilities for all practitioners to safeguard children and adults from abuse and

neglect. (Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, 2014). These procedures along with legislation such as the Children Act 2004, which was adapted and amended from the Children Act 1989 to reinforce the safeguarding of children into UK law. This Act establishes clear guidance and provides support to local authorities, schools, and other care organisations to effectively manage official involvement in matters concerning children's welfare in the UK. Additionally, the Childcare Act 2006 centres more on children from birth to five years old and considers the childhood services that should be available to them, such as education and other non – supervised activities. (Linsey and McAuliffe, 2006). Having an in-depth knowledge of these legislations as well as other relevant legislations is essential to keep children free from harm and abuse. It also ensures their rights are being acknowledged. This knowledge can also be considered as imperative to professional practice as it is now statutory guidance across the UK which is regularly reviewed and updated. (NSPCC Learning, 2025)

Partnerships with multiple agencies is important to professional practice as it ensures that each department are working together to affirm the same outcomes for the benefit of the child. Gasper (2010) offers that multi agency working facilitates needs to be met enabling families to have their requirements addressed in a coordinated manner. Collaborative practice involves agencies enhancing coordination, planning, executing, and evaluating their joint efforts as a more integrated team that offers diverse perspectives and expertise to operate as a whole. This approach can ensure that children, parents, and families receive the support they require. There are a multitude of professional agencies available such as the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn, and Social Care Wales. Each of these professional agencies contribute to many factors of settings policies and procedures to ensure the wellbeing of children is being met.

Observing children can be considered as important for professional practice as it gives an understanding of child development and how to better meet the needs of the child. The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) (2008)

states that by observing children and identifying their progress, collaboration, and contentment along with knowing their previous understanding can help support the practitioner to create a curriculum that can facilitate children's development according to their needs. Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales. Their vision is to improve the quality of education for all learners in Wales (Estyn, n.d.). They can identify strengths and areas for improvement at a school to ensure that the needs and educational excellence is being adhered to and met. This is important for professional practice as it can highlight any areas for improvement thus enabling the practitioner to adapt their approach which will therefore positively impact the needs of the children. The planning cycle can inform professional practice. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes assessment for learning which is at the heart of impactful Early Years practice. It allows the practitioner to observe the child and then using the information gathered, can help understand how the child is developing and then plan progressive measures to support and enhance their learning. This method ca be used to support transitions ensuring that the child's development and learning continue efficiently. (Birth to 5 matters n.d.).

The United Nations is an international organisation founded after the Second World War in 1945, to maintain international peace and security, cultivate friendly relationships among nations and promote better living standards and human rights. (United Nations, 2015) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter UNCRC), is a declaration that ensures that children under the age of 18 have the basic human rights and that they are promoted and respected. It also aims to recognise that children grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality, and solidarity. Within the UNCRC, there are 54 articles covering four broad categories. These are; the right to life, the right to develop, the right to be protected and the right to participate. (UNICEF, 2016). As a professional practitioner the best interest of the child is at the forefront of everything that regards them and can be seen as one of the core values of working with children. In Article 3 of the UNCRC, it states that the best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. (UNCRC, 1989). Article 12 continues to discuss the importance of listening to and respecting the voice of the child.

This could be in relation to important decisions and everyday life. Additionally, Articles 28 and 29 offer that all children have a right to education and that education must develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full. As professional practitioners it is important to fulfil these rights to aid children to achieve their fullest potential as they move into adult life.

To summarise, there are many distinct aspects of professional practice and its importance of meeting the individual and inclusive needs of children. There are numerous legislations to guide a practitioner to ensure that they are putting the child's needs at the forefront of their planning and day to day activities. Also, cohesively working with other agencies also ensures that the child's best interests are being met and that they are being listened to. Finally, understanding how effective communication can enable a child's progress is another strategy to promote meeting the needs of children.

Reference List

Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

A. Craft & A. Paige-Smith (eds.) (2011) *Developing reflective practice in the early years* 2nd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Birth to 5 matters. (n.d.) *Observation, Assessment and Planning.* Available at: https://birthto5matters.org.uk/observation-assessment-and-planning/ (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Brock, A. (ed.) (2015) *The early years reflective practice handbook*. London: Routledge.

City & Guilds, WJEC. (2023) *Effective communication | The importance of effective communication in children's care, play, learning, and development.* Available on Moodle. (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Clarà, M. (2014). What Is Reflection? Looking for Clarity in an Ambiguous Notion. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *66*(3), 261-271. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/10.1177/0022487114552028 (Original work published 2015)

Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (2008) *Observing children.* Available on Moodle. (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Department for Education [DoE] (2024) *Working in partnership with parents and carers*. Available at: https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/support-for-practitioners/working-in-partnership-with-parents-and-carers (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Elaine Hallet (2013) *The Reflective Early Years Practitioner*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: https://research-ebsco-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/linkprocessor/plink?id=26a4e09d-f2e6-3db3-9062-a69ae87c0e82 (Accessed: 10 October 2025).

Estyn (n.d.) *About Estyn.* Available at: https://estyn.gov.wales/about-us/ (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Gasper, M. (2010). Multi-*agency working in the early years: challenges and opportunities*. London; SAGE.

Gasper, M. (2015) 'Professional Practice and Early Childhood Today', in Reed, M. and Walker, R. (ed.) *A Critical Companion to Early Childhood*. 1st edn. London: Sage.

Lindon, J. (2016). Reflective *Practice and Early Years Professionalism.* Third edition. London, England: Hodder Education.

Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

Linsey, A. and McAuliffe, A. (2006) 'Children at the Centre? The Childcare Act 2006', *Children & Society*, 20(5), pp. 404–408. doi:10.1111/j.1099-0860.2006.00057.x.

NSPCC (2025) *History of Child Protection in the UK.* Available at:https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/history-of-child-protection-in-theuk (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Online College (2022) *Children's Act 2004* Available at:https://online-learning-college.com/knowledge-hub/early-years/childrens-act-2004/#h-what-is-the-children-s-act (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Orey, M. (2014) *Communication Skills Training.* Virginia: ATD Press.

Perez, R. (2019) 'What Does It Mean to Be a Professional?' *Professional Case Management*. 24 (4) pp 212.

Powell, S. (2010) 'HIDE AND SEEK: VALUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE*', British Journal of Educational Studies.*58, (2).

Social Care Wales (2025) *Overview* Available at: https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/information-and-learning-hub/sswbact/overview (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Swartz, R.J., and Perkins, D.N. (1989) *Teaching thinking: Issues and approaches*. Midwest Publications.

The Open University (2014) *4 Models of reflection – core concepts for reflective thinking.* Available at:https://www.open.edu/openlearn/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=51386&section=4 (Accessed: 12 October 2025)

Thompson, C. (2021). Reflective *practice for professional development: a guide for teachers*. 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003056812.

Trimasse, N. (2024) 'The use of reflective reports in higher education', *Reflective Practice*, 26(1), pp. 154–171. doi: 10.1080/14623943.2024.2424520.

UNICEF. (2016) *Children's Rights* https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/ (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

United Nations. (2015) *About us* https://www.un.org/en/about-us (Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Student Number: 2503116
Word Count: 2900
Module Code: ECEY4009

University of Edinburgh (2024) *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle.* Available at: https://reflection.ed.ac.uk/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle (Accessed: 12 October 2025)

University of Hull (2024). Reflective *writing: home.* Available at: https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/reflectivewriting/index (Accessed: 12 October 2025).

Welsh Government (2023) *Enabling Learning*. Available at: https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/enabling-learning (Accessed: 18 October 2025).