

Cover sheet:

For this assignment i have submitted the following:

Component 1: Personal development plan

Component 2: Briefing paper

Component 3: written piece

I have not used AI during this assignment

Part 1:

Personal development plan

1. Carry out ACI (Adult Child Interaction)

Specific:

Assess the quality of my interaction with the children by making a video recording of myself and a child in the setting, doing an activity of the child's choosing.

Measurable:

This will be recorded and the watched back by myself and my senior practitioner within that week. We will then analyse what went well and what did not.

Achievable:

I will need to look at the adult child interaction framework and familiarise myself with what is needed of me.

From doing this I will be able to assess my performance and make improvements on the quality of the interactions.

Relevant:

I am setting this goal now as it is a requirement for professional development through my work. It is a task that will need to be carried out termly going forward.

Time bound:

I will carry out the adult child interaction 6/10/2025, I will give myself till Friday 10th to watch the video back with my senior and complete any paperwork for progression.

2. Complete Childcare degree

Specific:

I want to complete the childcare and education degree and reach graduation. I want to do this by July 2027. This is a personal goal to me.

Measurable:

I will measure the progress of this by completing the assessments set by the university to a good standard. I will use my feedback to track my progress and access the recommended suggestions to improve my work going forward.

Achievable:

This task is achievable if I continue to attend my lectures and hand in any assignments that I have on time, completing the work to the best of my ability.

Relevant:

I am setting this goal now as it is a new challenge I have taken on and would love to be able to complete successfully.

Time bound:

The deadline for this is July 2027, if I continue working as I am this will be doable and realistic.

3. Complete this term child assessments

Specific:

I want to complete this terms assessments, of my key worker children, within my setting, before the end of the school term.

Measurable:

To make this measurable I have been observing the children and collating evidence for 6 weeks to ensure I have the information to complete these thoroughly.

Achievable:

This is achievable as I have already started to collate information, I spend time with the children daily and make regular observations to support me with this. My senior practitioner will allow time out sessions to support completing these.

Relevant:

This goal is essential for my profession. It is required as part of my job role to observe the children for 6 weeks and then start to write up their child assessments before they transition to nursery settings.

Time bound:

There is a rather decent period in which this needs to be completed. Working on this regularly throughout the week will ensure the document is completed by December 5th 2025.

Word count:494

What is reflection and reflective practise?

(As stated by Donald Schon in the reflective model's toolkit) "Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning." Reflective practice is looking back on practice and having the ability to think about the positives and the negatives, thinking about what went well and thinking of ways things can be changed and improved for future practice. This is considered to be an essential tool when working with children and young people. This can be done individually or as part of a group. Reflection and reflective practice are generally seen as a good form of practice especially in the childcare and health sector.

Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

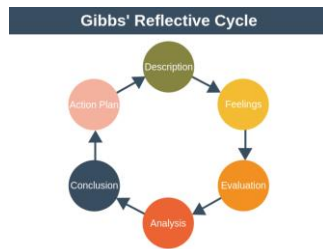
Reflective practice is an important factor to supporting early years practitioners and their practice within early years settings. Having the ability to carry out reflections enables professionals to discuss the positives and negatives as well as analysing the quality of their interactions and improvements that could be made. "When practitioners engage in reflection, they can improve provision and practice by making informed decisions about whether their work with children is effective or not." (Brookfield, 1995). In a continuously changing environment it is essential that practitioners can adapt their practice when the demand requires it, this is good professional practice as it reflects on-the-spot learning. Reflective practice can help practitioners build confidence in their abilities, providing them with the skills to analyse and be critical about their practice. It encourages practitioners to consider their roles in the children's learning and allows a deeper understanding as to why do what they do and what they are learning from activities or scenarios. Reflective practice can also be done collectively, as part of a group, this generally leads to a deeper level of reflection providing better outcomes for the children.

The theory of reflective practise:

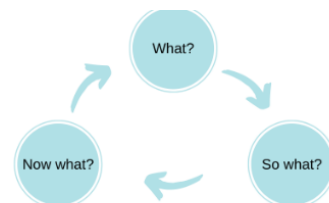
According to Dewey "Through the notion of reflection, practice could be seen as being more informed. By being more informed, a practitioner could be regarded as being particularly skilful and therefore possess important knowledge of practice." Dimova, Y. and Loughran, J. (2009) believing that practitioners should see any challenges within the setting as invitations to put their knowledge into practice. Dewey continues to say that not only is it enough to know, there also needs to be a desire to apply and this is where reflection is created. He believed that professionals needed to have open-mindedness, to consider problems in new and different ways, have wholeheartedness to be enticed and engaged by thinking and to have responsibility for their actions, taking intellectual responsibility, knowing why something is worth believing in. Dewey had 5 phrases that fit together to form the process of reflection, these are, problem, suggestion, hypothesis, reasoning and testing. All these stages guide practitioners through the process of reflection.

Additionally, according to Schön, "reflective practitioner is someone for whom continuous reflection is an integral part of the way they practice on a daily basis." (Taylorfrancis.com 2025) Schons theory is based on knowledge gained from a practitioner's own experience. He described two forms of reflection, reflection on action and reflection in action. It seems reflection on action is rather like Dewey's theory as it is a deliberate act of thinking back over actions and reflecting upon this, whereas reflecting in action is rather unanticipated, refraining a situation so that it can be seen differently. He focuses on the role of the practitioner and how they navigate through and appreciate problems that arise.

Gibbs' model



Driscoll's model



Analysis of models:

To look at both Gibbs and Driscoll's models of reflection there are many differences to examine. Firstly, Gibbs model has many more stages to it whereas Driscoll's model has fewer. Similarly, both Driscoll and Gibbs start with a description of the situation, however Gibbs then moves on to consider feelings felt during and after the situation, whereas Driscoll moves swiftly on to the 'so what?' encouraging practitioners to think about what has been learned during the situation. By considering feelings it encourages practitioners to reflect on the learning of the child and their own learning too. Gibbs then goes onto the stage of evaluation where the positives and negatives of the situation are discussed and personal points of views are considered before moving onto analysing the situation, using all information to properly make sense of it. The analysis will then lead onto the conclusion encouraging thinking about if other actions could have been taken and if this could have led to different outcomes. Gibbs model then concludes with an action plan of steps to be taken if the situation was to rise again. Whereas Driscoll's model concludes with now what? Which asks us to think about what actions will be taken next, encouraging practitioners to think about if any changes could be made at all. Driscoll's model acknowledges that practitioners may decide to make no changes at all to their practice after reflecting and this is just as valid. As it can be seen from all the information given, Gibbs model of reflection provides opportunity for more in-depth reflection. As it has more stages Gibbs model encourages more consideration and thought supporting practitioners with their reflective practice.

Conclusion

To conclude, Gibbs model of reflection could be favoured by practitioners as it offers a more in depth reflection, recognising that there are learning opportunities for future development especially when considering similar situations. "It emphasizes the importance of reflecting on experiences to gain insights, learn from mistakes, and improve future actions." (McLeod 2025). However, it does seem that this is a longer process compared to Driscoll's model. Both models of reflection require a lot of thought and input encouraging practitioners to come to the best outcomes to support their learning and the learning of the children.

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.

(OHara, 2005) states *“Most people associate ‘professions’ with lawyers, doctors and similar occupations that carry social status and respect; The general perception of a professional is someone skilled and proficient, with expert knowledge and a formal qualification; yet the experience of the Deputy Manager above suggests that some professions are somehow more professional than others.”* leading us to believe that not all professionals are seen the same throughout different work forces. Generally, some professionals are seen to be more respected than others, even when practitioners are extremely qualified and skilled in their field, this is particularly seen in the childcare sector in the opinions of the public and their recognition of the value of the service provided. Lack of recognition for the knowledge and training of practitioners also support this.

According to Department for Children, Schools and Families, values that are important for professional practice are,

- “• *A genuine liking for and interest in children and their development*
- *Good communication skills with children and Mums, Dads and other carers*
- *Confidence*
- *Patience and professionalism*
- *A helpful, caring and understanding nature*
- *An ability to work with parents and carers as well as with children*
- *A commitment to social inclusion*
- *The ability to work effectively as part of a team*
- *A commitment to undertake training*
- *A sense of fun.”* S.Powell (2010)

Generally, these values seem straight forward when considering the role of professional practitioners, having a genuine interest and liking for children is essential when working in a childcare setting, being able to communicate with children, at their level and gain their trust and understanding is fundamental to supporting their care, learning and development. Inclusive practice is essential to professional development, according to (Wilshire 2023) *“In the early years, this means creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment and using various teaching methods and materials that cater to different learning styles.”*

Although these values are of importance, they are not the only values that exist. Within individual settings values will be displayed in documents such as the code of conduct that will resemble these and are adapted to suit that setting.

Having strong values such as confidence and professionalism helps to build relationships and trust between practitioners, families and professionals. This is where successful, collaborative work comes into play supporting the child holistically.

Having the ability to communicate effectively is essential when working with children, their families and other professionals. *“Effective communication involves listening, understanding and responding to people.”* according to Principles and Values of Children’s Care, Play, Learning and Development. (WJEC, 2019) Developing this skill is fundamental for building strong positive relationships and sharing information with both children and their families. When dealing with parents/carers it’s important that they feel listened to and respected, showing care and understanding and responding appropriately will help build positive working relationships. Being warm and welcoming and being mindful of body language is also important when communicating with others, *“A childcare worker can appear open, friendly or unfriendly depending on body language and tone of voice.”* (WJEC, 2019) when communicating with children and young people getting down to their level, being approachable and happy and showing genuine interest in what they tell you, helps build positive relationships and in turn is essential to the needs of that child, it builds trust and a genuine connection allowing the child to feel safe and secure within the setting.

Having qualified practitioners within a setting is paramount for the safety and wellbeing of children. As a childcare professional it's essential to have In-depth knowledge and understanding in all aspects of practice. According to (cwlwm.org.uk,2016) *"High quality Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the Early Years, Childcare and Playwork workforce are essential in helping to ensure that all children in Wales have a bright future."* Regular mandatory training is essential for staff to be competent and carry out best practice. Within my experience in a Flying Start setting, mandatory training in safeguarding, first aid, prevent, is carried regularly for best practices, keeping professionals up to date and to provide confidence in practice. Having good knowledge and understanding on First Aid and Safeguarding procedures provide children with a safe and caring environment that allows them to explore and learn safely. In some cases, senior staff members may require more in depth training to support their team. This can be seen in safeguarding training where there are multiple categories that grow in detail. According to (safeguarding.wales,n.d.) *"Effective safeguarding requires: Each practitioner and organisation to play their part and contribute to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of the child;"* Safeguarding involves us all and the Children always come first, and their wellbeing and safety should always be paramount to any professional working with children and young people.

Multiagency working is extremely important when supporting children, young people and their families. A range of agencies and support workers collectively coming together to share information and work together to offer the appropriate care and support needed. *"Partnership working is embodied in the notion of children, parents, families and communities having access to a wide range of support and developmental services"* (Walker 2018) By working together, all professionals, from school staff, childcare workers, hospitals, social services, police officers etc can all share their information and no details can be missed, everyone shares the information that they have to build a big picture of the child and family, filling the gaps and working collectively to provide the best outcomes and services, offering support and guidance and ensuring that the wellbeing of the child is at the centre of their focus.

There have catastrophic cases where professionals have not worked together, and this has led to awful outcomes for children. For example, the case of Victoria Climbe where there were multiple agencies involved that had seen Victoria ample times, however little communication between them, leading to the suffering of a small child and horrendous outcomes.

According to Dr, Stella Louis, *“Observation is about much more than describing what a child does. It means really watching and listening, being aware of the child’s actual development, recognising what interests, motivates and engages them, and then reflecting on what these observations tell us about the child’s learning.”* (Louis, 2022)

Through observing the children we get to see what they are drawn to and enjoy, what interests them and why they do what they do, how they interact with the world around them, as well as noticing activities they rarely access. Practitioners then analyse and respond to their findings and provide activities to continue supporting the children's development and learning. Not only does this way of working ensure the child is receiving the support they need to further their learning, but it also shows their independence in their learning and how the learning is coming directly from the child, and the adult is there to help facilitate it. Frederick Froebel believed *“Through observation we can learn a lot about why and when children do certain things. Observations help us to understand what children might not yet be able to articulate but are trying to tell us in their own way”* (Louis 2022)

“The Welsh Government has led the way in promoting children's rights. The approach is based on a commitment to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).” (Welsh Government 2022)

The Welsh Government have formed their legislation based on the principles of the UNCRC, which then is implemented through practice from care and education systems implementing legislation through policies and practice.

Policies are in place to ensure practitioners work to the best of their ability to keep children safe and help facilitate them to access those rights.

It is extremely important for practitioners to be aware of these rights and understand why they are in place to support children and young people.

Having this in place ensures staff are regularly trained to support their practice, policies are in place to keep children and workers safe and that the environment is safe and secure and well established for the children accessing it.

To conclude, for a practitioner to be a professional there are a lot of points to cover and a lot of work to be done. Having confidence in one's ability and displaying good values and work ethic, having courage, building relationships, communicating, learning and developing, observing and planning all help to shape a practitioner into a professional. Although socially it may not be recognised that childcare practitioners are professionals, it can be seen from everything above that practitioners require a lot of skills and knowledge and have respectable values to deserve to be professionals within their own right. A lot of work, patience and dedication goes into the work of professionals daily and it is sad that practitioners do not get the recognition that they deserve.

Word count: 1495

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