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Page 1: Content page

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I have not used AI (artificial intelligence) for any of this work, my poster is made on Canva and all the research is my own.

S	Over the next few months I'd ideally like to accomplish passing my driving test, this is my goal because I have an adorable son who I'd enjoy taking on days out, it would be my means to get to work and would change my life as currently I walk everywhere but there are many limits to where I get to go distance wise. My main constraints are the cost, confidence and my commitments as a full-time worker and mother along with being a student.	My goal over the next two years is to accomplish my degree, the reason I chose to return to education was for my child, myself and my future. I am required to demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected by the early years course and complete all elements of my course. I do feel as if my main constraints are the academic pressure, my own personal life and understanding different topics.
M	I am currently measuring my progress by instructor feedback, mock theory tests and increasing my confidence driving. My target will have been met when my instructor validates that I'm ready to take my test or that I'm driving confidently and	I will be measuring my progress by keeping log of all my marks and percentages, completion of all modules and using my lecturers for feedback. once my coursework and grades achievement have met the requirements to pass my degree I will then

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	independently up to tests standards.	know I have met my desired goal.
A	I'd prefer not to rush into it and make sure I'm sharpening my skills, maintaining confidence and remaining safe. For me to pass the practical I'll need to focus on my theory test at the same time. The logical steps in which I'd need to keep up with are continuing with regular once a week lessons and passing my theory test.	I'd like to do this by sustaining focus, attending lectures, meeting my deadlines and above all remembering why I chose to do this for myself. I will need to create realistic study schedules which are up to date with my personal life, keep record and track of all deadlines and acknowledge the skills required to complete each module.
R	This is a worthwhile goal for me because it will increase my independence and provide me with an important life skill, it will be beneficial to me and my family. It interlinks with my long-term goal with university; I will be able to get to university for my lectures and return home afterwards which will put less stress on my partner	Completing my degree means something to me because it will provide me with a more superior future fitted to my capabilities and provide me with a degree doing something that I love! It will open pathways for me to choose my future suitable for me and my family, successfully completing my degree will help me achieve my ambitions.
T	I'm hoping to achieve this by February 2027. I'm currently going in the right direction for this to happen the only setback I've obtained along the way was an ankle injury, but in the present, it's going in the direction I'm hoping.	I'm Hoping to complete this by the year 2028. I will need to set deadlines to ensure I stay on track and will regularly monitor my

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CARE

WHAT IS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE?

The nomenclature 'reflective practice' comes from the research of Dewey and Schon. "The active, persistence, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds it supports" Dewey (1910, p.6). This means you will have a different way of greeting situations, you will need to consider how the situation has turned out to be what it is and why. It is also very important in planning as you will need to use critical thinking to develop a sensible lesson suitable for all children at different levels of their learning journey. Using the OAP (observation, assessment, planning) cycle as a starting point to dedicate time to yourself and children involved (birth to 5 matters 2021).

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

- Improvements with different childrens outcomes and responsiveness.
- Proactive vs Reactive care.
- Observation to action.
- Develops confidence.
- Deeper understanding of a child's mind.
- understanding what works well for an individual.
- reduces practitioner burnout.
- To analyze childrens progression
- to analyze your own progression
- Planning

FOR EXAMPLE

I am using Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle development to create my example.

DESCRIPTION: I set an activity (dot to dot) out for my children in the setting, the majority completed it with no issues. A fraction of children completed it with difficulty, and a few minority did not complete it.

FEELING: I felt as if maybe I didn't include every child's learning development, and I was pushing them when they are all at different paces.

EVALUATION: I did not include certain children's learning development. **ANALYSIS:** They need more practice, work together in pairs instead of segregating them to individual work.

ACTION PLAN: Next time, they will work in pairs with more of explanation on the work, if certain individuals still need help I will need to sit with them and change my explanation to suit their learning methods.

EVIDENCE TO ABOVE

Longford (2017) states that reflective practice can support optimistic outcomes by intentionally changing our teaching methods to ensure its developing the child's well-being and engagement, which means, being more child-centered and understanding, a specific child is not the same as the rest and need different approaches. This interlinks with Proactive vs Reactive care, "troubled teams" have a tendency to be more reactive and learn in response to real performance difficulties and crises (failures)." Developing the reflective healthcare team, Professor Tony Ghaye (2005, p.24). Gindis (1998) believes the observation in children and behaviours is essential reflective practice because it supports development and learning. I believe in this too because if you observe a child's development and character you will be able to assist them correctly in the way they deserve, giving a child your dedication and time will build their confidence. Reflective practice in early years gives you a deeper understanding of a child's mind by uncovering underlying patterns by monitoring a child's behaviour, learning and reactions (parenta 2024). Dialogues with co workers can be beneficial to reflective practice because it can gain multiple different perspectives which creates a wider range of possible outcomes for dealing with a situation (early years 2023). Using cycles like the OAP is really beneficial in monitoring children's progression because it is so easy to follow you observe what's happening, assess the situation, plan how you will take care of what's happening or change what you'd do next time. It ensures teaching is responsive and child centred, observation may focus on how the child reacts, their language and communication, problem solving and so on... there are so many different ways to observe a child. To assess a child is to understand your observation on them, knowledge of their experiences, it helps build a realistic image of the child's development overtime. The planning fraction of the cycle means to adapt your ways to suit them, be flexible, learning through interactions, adapting the environment and utensils (little owls resources 2026). Reflective practice is also about focusing on what works for yourself too, are the children engaged in what your teaching them? Are they adapting well to the environment you putting them in? Well, you will need to carry out a concise observation on how well your doing as well, this benefits both practitioner and the children. Be mindful, Record your progression, and the main one is talk to your colleagues because that is the best way to assess yourself is from their critical feedback (Edwards, H. n.d).

ACADEMIC EVIDENCE

Gibbs (1988) created the reflective cycle, this gives us a deeper understanding of what a structured tactic to assessing things that have happened or that are happening, measuring effectiveness and studying development.

Schon (1983) differentiated between reflection-in-action, this considers changing practice there and then, and reflection-on-action which is considered as evaluating the situation afterwards.

Dewey (1993) reinforced the significance of reflective deliberation, which is facilitating practitioners to explore their underlying assumptions and use their exposure to support future decision making.

All together, these frameworks establishes a good foundation for fundamental reflection, evidence informed practice and professional advancement in early years education and care.

Reflection changes everyday experiences into a possibility for growth. We can become more efficient practitioners and by creating meaningful experiences for our little ones, question your practice, learn from challenges and adapt to every single child's needs.

DISTINCTION FEATURES

Critical analysis: figuring out the pros and the cons and how you'll need to adapt to changes if needed.

Theory into practice: Using gibbs' theory or the OAP to direct reflection and future planning.

Child centered approach: Changing activities to mould into individual needs and capabilities.

Professional development: Knowledge gained through experience, feedback, and discussing the situation with your colleagues.

Continuous improvements: setting goals and assessing whether these changes are improving childrens learning, development and engagement.

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Professional practice in early years education and care incorporates delivering children with a supportive, safe and diverse and welcoming workplaces that will guide them along their learning journey helping to develop to their own specific needs or requirements and maintaining a healthy well-being. We as practitioners have an obligation to realise that each child is unique and may have different capabilities, interests, culture and backgrounds. Exemplary practice requires good communication, professional values, teamwork, positive relationships and extremely careful planning and observation. A crucial part of being a practitioner is understanding responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and their own rights. In Wales, the early childhood play, learning and care (ECPLC) governance framework and significance of children's development, wellbeing, and importance of steadily enhancing practice. This assignment will be analysing the importance of professional values, good communication, multi-agency working, observations and planning, it will also include the United Nations Convention on the rights of children (UNCRC) in meeting children's personalised strengths, interests and requirements.

Dickerson and Trodd (2020) believe Professional values are a necessity in an early year's environment as they guide practitioners' behaviour, decision making, relationships with children, dealing with different families surrounding all cultures and needs and colleagues. The different aspects and important values consist of honesty, empathy, equality, respect, confidentiality and safeguarding children. These specific requirements help to shape an environment where children feel safe, valued and equal. Every single child deserves to be treated and presented with equal opportunities to participate in their learning journey and play despite their culture, language, family circumstances, disability or their stage of development. A reflective practitioner committed to inclusion will recognise that a child's development can be completely different to another child, one child may require a certain level of support compared to another (Birth to 5). An example of this is when doing a group activity some children may complete the task independently, whilst others may require additional support from an adult. Facilitating appropriate changes to develop a child's learning helps children remain engaged in a meaningful manner rather than expecting the same response from every child to achieve the same outcome the same way. Benish-Weisman (2021) holds strong opinions on how values influence the way practitioners react to a child's behaviour, instead of putting a label on a child for example 'difficult', practitioners need to take a step back and understand the bigger picture. Does this behaviour communicate something? From my personal experience there's always an underlying

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issue or need that needs attention, maybe its frustration, tiredness or unclear explained instructions. Taking a step back to understand what's really going on and living in a child's mind helps practitioners identify the right strategy of dealing with the predicament whilst making sure all children are still safe.

Another important factor in professional practice is confidentiality, all children's information should be secured safely and handled by appropriate adults for legitimate reasons. Although, confidentiality certainly does not cease a practitioner from informing any concerns on safeguarding information of a child may need to be disclosed to the correct persons in charge always following Safeguarding procedures and policies (Social services and wellbeing (Wales) act 2014). The Welsh Governments (2023) ECPLC quality assurance framework elevates high standards for responses to children's individual needs and supports their on-going development. This manifests that professional values aren't just about your own beliefs; they have an influence on fairness of everyday children experiences...they only get 1 childhood, and we are a part of it and shaping them. Professional values must be reflected consistently in our everyday actions and decisions if they aren't we are responsible for a 'failed' child. It is our responsibility to challenge discriminations, recognise needs and requirements, if we don't a child may face exclusion or missed possibilities and opportunities which is done to us (Haken Logfren & Annika Manni 2022).

Dogan & Camurcu (2025) believe effective communication is fundamental in building groundbreaking relationships with parents, pupils and colleagues, this allows practitioners to comprehend the needs of the children and provide constant support. Communication involves such items as listening, written records, body language, expressions, facial expressions and visual communication. For example, when communicating with young children, we as practitioners should always use language appropriate to the age and development stage, which ensures understanding. In my experience going down to their level and using the words they have described for the situation enables them to understand me a lot more than when I don't use their vocabulary the same way Using short instructions and gestures can help children to picture things in their own mind. From a learning aspect, practitioners should never assume a child with speaking difficulties has nothing to contribute, there are many ways to deal with a situation like this. It is our job to work with families with effective communication to help a child's development especially if there are superior needs such as a speech impediment, we can help by introducing new vocabulary, reading picture story books, encouraging drawing and pointing out words, this will allow a child to become more comfortable, confident and safe with you (cschimka 2025).

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Multi agency working entails professionals from many services all working together to support children or a singular child and their family. It all bows down to what the circumstances are, it may include an early year practitioner's opinion. For example, I noticed a child in the nursery was struggling with his communication so the steps I took to ensure the child received the correct help was recording relevant observations, I openly discussed my concerns and observations with my line manager and we all worked together in partnership with the parents and health visitor who then put the correct referrals in place such as a speech and language therapist the child is now coming on leaps and bounds. Another attribute of multi-agency working is that it improves consistency when colleges pull together and contribute different knowledge and understanding (NSPCC 2023). It is very important that multi agency working doesn't affect the responsibility that we as practitioners still carry especially when needing to act on situations, safeguarding children is still our responsibility as well, we still need to follow the professional steps rather than waiting for a response from a high Arcy if a situation arises.

Another consideration in reflective practice is observation and planning; they aid practitioners to understand a child's developmental stage and provide adequate learning opportunities. Observations can be formal or informal in professional reflective practice, formal means planned observations or assessments whereas informal observations are moments spotted during a play session or care routines, you should always regardless of which observation strategy it is, have children's hearts in mind to ensure the planning aspect of it isn't aimed for adult fun and is child centred. After occurring all your observations, you may need to adjust plans to suit individuals, it may be changing environments, adding additional properties to ensure focus is kept, or even a very slight change to be certain a child isn't getting stressed out (Parenta,2025). Children develop at different stages you should never solely rely on age related expectations, in some areas children need extra support and that's ok. For example, a child who is always building with stickle bricks may be developing his or her problem-solving skills, we as practitioners could encourage them to develop their mind further and extending their interest by introducing different construction material. In Wales, the ECPLC quality framework aids practitioners to reflect and enhance the experiences offered to children and babies (Welsh government,2023). This means reinforcing the suitable evidence used in everyday practice to help along with decision making. Therefore, we form an ongoing process: observe, interpret things that are said, review and plan an appropriate response.

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The United Nations Convention on the rights of a child (UNCRC) is an agreement internationally which is set up for the importance of the rights for our littlest ones. The importance of his organisation is to recognise a child has their own needs, views and entitlement, understanding children's rights encourages practitioners' decisions that promote safety, inclusion, participation and wellbeing. Article 12 on UNICEF reinforces children's rights in expressing their views regarding matters that affect them. Young children communicate preferences through gestures, words, facial expressions, play and behaviour, practitioners should allow themselves time to observe these forums of communications and provide suitable opportunities for children to make their own minds up and voice their opinions (UNICEF, N.D). article 3 is always about having the best interests of a child in mind, "the best interests of the child must be a priority in all decisions and action" *A summary of the UN convention on the rights of the child* (UNICEF). Another article is number 6, life, survival and development; this means the government has a duty to do everything they can to ensure that a child survives and develops to their maximum (UNICEF, N.D). an article crucial in professional practice is, article 31; this states that a child no matter their religion, culture or disabilities has a right to relax, play and associate in a wide range of activities (UNICEF, N.D). The last article ill speak on is article 29 which in some way interlinks with article 31, number 29 establishes that education is important in shaping a child, it must be child-centred and encourage a child's respect for human rights (UNICEF N.D). In my time working at a nursery I have experienced may times where children struggle with voicing their concerns or views, I have notices how easy children get dismissed because it takes them too long to explain or they are crying whilst explaining this happens everywhere but we should never just dismiss them, they have a voice and we have a duty to listen to it.

Professional practice in early years education and care mandates practitioners to consolidate professional values, effective communication, collaborative working, observation and planning, and rembering children's rights. Professional values and the UNCRC navigate practitioners to create decisions that are child centred and promotes inclusion. High-quality practice involves practitioners to realise challenges, limitations and review the significance of their decision making. By using the evidence written above, working with families in partnership and continually evaluating practitioner responses, practitioners can devise safe, healthy, responsive environments where each child matters and feels important, it helps them grow, thrive and develop in their own unique way.

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