

Module 2 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.

Create a reflective personal development plan (PDP) that includes personal and professional aims to help develop your professional practitioner skills, including a personal reflection (500 words)

What do I know already? As a current teaching assistant, I understand the importance of providing inclusive learning experiences that meet the individual needs of children. I have experience of observing activities in childcare and education settings and can recognise how practitioners adapt their approaches to engage children effectively. I know the importance of applying different principles to children and have seen the positive outcomes of these reinforcements.				
What have I learnt so far? I have developed a stronger understanding of how theory links to practice, especially through play, social interactions, and meaningful experiences. I have gained confidence through teaching SEN children on the importance of inclusive communication-based strategies. I now recognise the importance of reflective practice in continuously improving the quality of education I provide.				
Objective	Actions (How will I achieve this objective/ what needs to be done?)	Resources (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?)
1 Build confidence in planning and leading age-appropriate activities. Specifically with SEN children.	I intend to critically observe experienced practitioners delivering inclusive activities and record observations on how they adapt learning for children with different needs. I shall plan and lead my own small group sessions that include sensory and communication-based activities. I intend to seek feedback from my mentor and reflect on what went well and what could be done.	To demonstrate this, I will need SENCO support and guidance, advice from colleagues, access to different training or workshops, online resources for SEN strategies, and planning templates.	March 2026	Evidence of progress will include when I can independently plan, adapt and lead these inclusive activities that engage a range of children. My success will be shown through my mentor's feedback and my ability to evaluate each session effectively.
2 Develop my Welsh language and include it in educational settings.	I aim to implement basic Welsh phrases and vocabulary daily with not only children but family and friends. I plan to attend Welsh language classes or implement online learning tools to improve pronunciation and vocabulary.	To acquire this, I am going to access Welsh language learning apps and resources. I will also need support from Welsh speaking peers and bilingual learning materials.	May 2026	My success will be measured by my confidence in using Welsh naturally in educational settings. Getting feedback from tutors and children's engagement will show my improvements.
3 Strengthen my knowledge of key child development theorists.	I aim to research and summarise the main theories from different theorists such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Montessori, noting how each relates to early years practice. I set to link these theories to real life examples in my observations. I will also discuss these ideas with tutors to deepen my understanding.	To achieve this, I intend to use the University library and academic journals, lectures, online early years theory resources and discuss with tutors.	June 2026	Achievement of this goal will be evidenced by the fact I can confidently apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations. I hope to receive positive feedback in academic and work settings and demonstrate understanding during professional discussions.

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Design a briefing paper that explores the importance of reflective practise within the early years and analyses different reflective models. (1000 words)

What is reflection and reflective practice? Reflective practice is a core value of professional training as it “is promoted in a range of disciplines, particularly in education, health and social care, and is essential part of professional practice” (Brock, 2015, P.7). Reflective practice involves being self-aware, creative, and critical thinking and applying what has been learnt through	Why is reflective practice important for EY practitioners? Reflective practice is integral to quality improvement and professional growth in early years settings. It enables practitioners to evaluate their approaches, understand children's needs more deeply, and adapt their practice in line with current theories. Reflective practice encourages
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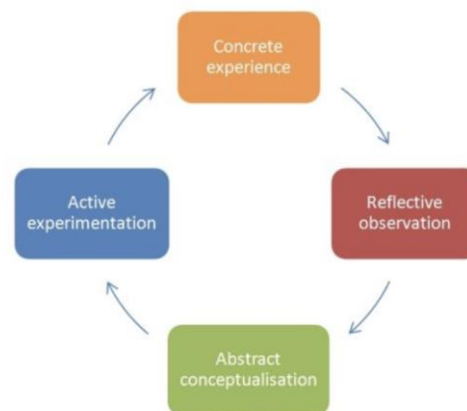
reflective thinking to enhance future practice and improve outcomes for children. Schon (1983, p.26) defines reflection as the capacity to think about what we are doing while we are doing it ("reflection-in-action") and after the event ("reflection-on-action"). This involves contemplating one's own experience in implementing knowledge to practice. In early years context, reflective practice supports practitioners in maintaining high standards of care, to meet the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and creating a continuous improvement cycle. This briefing paper examines the importance of reflective practice within early years education showing an analysis of different reflective models.	early years practitioners to be lifelong learners. By engaging in critical reflection, practitioners identify their strengths, area for development, and professional goals. This aligns with the EYFS (DfE,2025), which emphasises the importance of skilled practitioners who can adapt their practice to support all children's learning and development. Reflection also fosters self-awareness and accountability which are essential traits for maintaining professionalism. (Hallet, E, 2012) proposes that "reflection is a key attribute to being an early years practitioner as the development of a reflective early years workforce is important for thought and considered implementation of policy into practice". Reflective practice enables early years practitioners to assess their interactions, planning, and teaching strategies to identify what supports each child's learning. This encourages more inclusive, responsive, and child-centred approaches. Reflection promotes collaboration within teams through shared discussions, supervision and peer feedback creating a collective learning culture. Reflection is vital as it encourages evidence-based practice by linking theory to real life experiences, ensuring effective safeguarding and inclusivity for all children.
The theory of relative practice. Relative practice is the action of thinking critically about an experience, action, and decision to learn from them and enhance professional practice. The theory of relative practice is based off the work of (Schon 1983), who proposed that effective professionals continually learn through reflection on their experiences. His key principles were reflection-in-action, where you think about what you are doing while you are doing it and make real adjustments to practice and reflection-on-action, where you think after an event and analyse what happened and make improvements in the future. Building on John (Dewey's 1933) belief that reflection transforms experience into learning, and (Kolb's 1984) experiential	

learning cycle, reflective practice enables practitioners to connect theory with real-life situations. In early years education, this approach supports ongoing professional development by helping practitioners assess the effectiveness of their interactions, planning, and teaching strategies. Through regular reflection, practitioners adapt their practice to meet children's individual needs, promote inclusion, and maintain high standards of care, aligning with the reflective and evidence-based ethos required by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

Gibbs's Model



Kolbs's Model



Analysis of model- compare/contrast/pros/cons

Both Gibbs reflective cycle (1988) and Kolb's learning cycle (1984) provide structured ways to learn from experience as they are based on the same theorists Dewey and Schon, but they differ in their focus and execution.

Kolb's experimental learning cycle focuses on a "hands on experience and promotes planning to do something different and then testing it out". This relies on having hands on a 'concrete experience', 'reflective observation', 'abstract conceptualisation' and 'active experimentation'. (ucd, 2025). This learning cycle has an emphasis on reflective observation to analyse and draw conclusions from experience (University of Hull, 2024). Kolb's model is established in educational psychology and emphasises a continuous cycle process. It suggests that you can begin at any stage of the cycle, however, completing each stage is essential for effective learning. This cycle is mainly used throughout educational settings as it supports learning activities that require critical thinking and adaptability.

On the other hand, Gibb's reflective cycle is a more structured view of learning from experience. The cycle contains different points of an experience such as 'description', 'feelings', 'evaluation', 'analysis',

'conclusion', and 'action plan' (The University of Edinburgh). Within this model each stage is given a fuller description in comparison to Kolb's. This model can be used in either a stand-alone experience or within a collaboration which encourages people to not only just recall what has happened but to also explore emotions and outcomes to plan for future actions. Although this structure is more detailed, it is also valued for being simpler, making it easier for professional development.

Furthermore, as both models focus on learning from experience and improving future practice by using a cyclical process to show that actions are ongoing. As both are used in educational settings and encourage self-awareness they can be seen as quite similar. However, the structural difference and depth of each cycle show different outcomes of what these cycles offer as Gibb's focuses more on reflection and emotions whereas Kolb focuses on the cognitive process and less on emotions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, reflective practice is a vital tool for professional growth as it enables individuals to learn from experience, adapt to challenges and improve decision making. Models such as Gibb's and Kolb provide valuable frameworks for analysing experiences and enhancing professional growth. Reflection promotes self-awareness, critical thinking and adapting to unpredictable situations. Ultimately, consistent reflection empowers individuals to adapt and maintain high standards of professional competence and ethical practice.

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Written piece: 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 - including professional values, communication, multiagency work, observations, planning and the UNCRC. (1500 words)

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.

Introduction – what is professional practice/ what is a professional?

A professional is an individual who has a specified and valued insight into a particular profession where they are skilled and valued. Perez (2019) defines that “all professionals have unique skills, knowledge, and ethical standards that guide them”, while also claiming that “professionalism is an attitude that occurs through socialisation and formal education”. A professional is not only someone with a valued set of skills but also demonstrates ethical behaviour, accountability and a commitment to working in their specified field.

In terms of working with children, professional practice is specifically referring to the actions and behaviours of individuals within their work context. In early years contexts this is deemed by the Early Years Teachers Status (EYTS), where the early years provision and its model of professionalism is shown through provisions and complying with external regulations and meeting the needs of the government's policy (Dyer, 2018). Following this, professional practice within the context of working with children is grounded in legislation, frameworks, and ethical principles that ensure children's safety, values, and right to education.

What values are important for a professional practitioner and why are values important to professional practise?

Values form the moral and ethical foundation of professional practice as it maintains professionalism and accountability. Values are determined by (Johansson and Einarsdottir, 2018) as principles that guide human actions and judgements of whether actions are desirable or not. In early years contexts, values such as equality, empathy and respect are essential to following guidelines of being a professional. These values determine how practitioners create a positive and ethical working environment.

Professional protocols such as the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024) highlights the significance of these values to maintain professionalism. The EYFS requires a high level of professional conduct by upholding principles of equality and anti-discriminatory practice. This includes treating all children with respect, valuing their backgrounds, and ensuring no child is at a disadvantage due to religion, family background, ethnicity, disability, gender, or ability.

Perez (2019) demonstrates three values that are critical to the ethical identity of professionals, such as specialised training, recognition of the need for standards in practice and commitment to provide a service that goes beyond the personal interests of the professional. This shows that values in education are vital to professionalism as it includes an academic level while upholding guidelines that ensure equality of opportunity and inclusion for all individuals.

An essential part of maintaining and deepening values comes from (Gasper, 2015) who claims that professionals should constantly reflect, question assumptions and seek insights about their work. This shows a greater understanding of the importance of qualities individuals demonstrate with a distinction of 'principled practice', which is value-based practice, to recognise the needs of parents and children. These qualities of 'principle practice' and 'professional' produce the ideal professional, dedicated to the best practice (Gasper, 2015). Ultimately, values and reflection work together ensure that those values are actively examined, understood, and carried out in daily practice.

Why is communication and relationships important to professional practice and meeting the needs of children?

Effective communication and strong relationships are fundamental to professional practice.

Communication allows practitioners to share information and express empathy to build trust and relationships. Emotional communication allows children to begin effective relationships and confidence throughout their early development, which is an important value for professional practitioners to value.

Effective communication involves listening and understanding and responding to people. The (WJEC guidelines, 2023) show that it is important to communicate with a wide range of people and to show that they are paying attention. They state that “children often want a close adult when speaking to them, which can be shown through, going down to the child's level making them comfortable. The key features of effective communication are shown through seeing the effect of your own words on others, demonstrating empathy, being genuine, friendly, and showing respect.

Effective communication is vital to professional practice and meeting the needs of children as it is an essential skill needed throughout life which needs to be established at a young age. This can be shown through the case of Bowlby (1944). (Behrens K, et.al 2025) demonstrates the attachment theory style which shows a strong emotional bond between a child and their primary caregiver which is crucial for development. This attachment style shows how crucial it is for children to have a strong connection with an adult. Practitioners who communicate clearly and show genuine genuine interest in children's thoughts and feelings help create strong bonds.

Why is having an in-depth knowledge and understanding important to professional practice, including aspects of safeguarding?

Safeguarding is one of the most critical aspects of professional practice as it forms a foundation of all work surrounding children. The act of protecting a person's health, wellbeing, and human rights promotes an effective practice within childcare settings.

The (EYFS, 2024) states that “children learn best when they are safe, secure, their individual needs are met and when they have a positive relationship with the people caring for them.” It is stated that “providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.” These frameworks emphasise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that early identifications can prevent harm and protect children's rights.

It is important to a professional practitioner as it enables better decision making and improved outcomes for individuals. (The HM Government, 2018), state that “nothing is more important than children's welfare”, and that professionals have specific duties to safeguard and follow the 'Children's Acts' to ensure that children have the best quality education and life.

Practitioners must undertake regular training to ensure they are aware of current legislation, policies, and procedures. A lack of safeguarding knowledge can have negative consequences; therefore, ongoing professional development is essential.

Why is partnership and multi-agency working important to professional practice?

Partnership and multi-agency working are crucial for professional practice because it enables a coordinated and effective approach to supporting individuals. Working in partnership with parents and carers is central to the early years foundation stage (EYFS).

Not only is communication vital with children and practitioners but also the relationship between parents and other practitioners is also important in sustaining a professional role. The Department of Education states that “offering a range of opportunities for parents and careers to become involved in their children’s learning is important and to consider how to overcome barriers in working in partnership.” This statement is telling of how important partnership is to a professional role as it allows for information to be shared and coordinated with different responses to ensure that values and legislations are met to improve the value and wellbeing of everyone involved.

Legislations such as the (Children Act, 2004) promotes the principle of integrated working and effective partnership to ensure that children have support and that the support is holistic and child centered. Collaboration in relationships also enhances trust and confidence in childcare settings, encouraging parents to share information and seek support when needed.

How does the observation and planning cycle inform professional practice and ensure practitioners are meeting the needs of children?

The observation and planning cycle informs professional practice and ensures that practitioners meet the needs of children by ensuring that learning environments and activities are tailored to the unique needs and developmental stage of each individual child.

The Welsh Assembly Government states that by observing children during activities, practitioners will learn children's skills and gather information on what children know to have achievements in future planning. Data and information gathered when observing children is important to know children’s strengths and weaknesses to move them along and identify difficulties.

How do the principles of the UNCRC inform professional practice and why is this important?

The UNCRC is a declaration that children have basic human rights that should be respected and promoted, ensuring that they grow up with freedom, equality, and solidarity.

The UNCRC principles inform professional practice through many articles such as Article 3, 12, 28 and 29. Article 3 states that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration,” Article 12 states that “every child has the right to express their feelings, and to have their views taken seriously.” Article 28 and 29 states that “every child has the right to education and education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.” This informs the professional that wellbeing, views, and education are the centre of their focus in their professional work. For example, when practitioners are planning their activities, they need to put the children's wellbeing and views first when planning educational standards.

(UNICEF, n.d.) second this by claiming that the UNCRC guidelines explain how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy their rights. This directly shows how the UNCRC is vital for professional practice as they are the direct guidelines to follow to ensure children are at the core viewpoint when constructing their educational tools and observations in a children centered space.

Conclusion – summary of points

Recognising and analysing different aspects of professional practice highlights how values, communication, safeguarding, knowledge and partnership all contribute to meeting the individual needs of children. Professionalism in the early years is characterised by ethics, reflective practice and collaboration, all of which ensure that each child's wellbeing, rights and development remain central to practice. The frameworks of UNCRC and EYFS create inclusive learning environments that value diversity and promote equal opportunity. Ultimately, this reflective and principal approach enables all children to thrive and reach their fullest potential.

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