

ECEY4009
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ECEY4009 Portfolio of 3 Parts

No AI used.

Contents:

1. Personal Development Plan
2. Briefing Paper
3. Written Essay
4. Reference List – Briefing Paper
5. Reference List - Written Essay

Personal Development Plan

Personal Development Plan - The thinking, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that I will change and develop to achieve my vision and goals, adhere to my values, and become as resilient as possible.

No	Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?	Achievements (Progress so far)	Achievements (3-month Review)
1	Adjust my lifestyle to make it healthier.	I have a more balanced lifestyle, which includes habitual physical, mental, social and relationship activity, regular rest, and a balanced diet.	I will start exercising regularly, by going to a gym class at least once a week. I will maintain a healthy diet by eating healthier foods and stop snacking on unhealthy foods.	Start 9.10.24. Aim to achieve by 25.12.24	All other goals.	I have started to attend a gym class every Tuesday. I have given up eating chocolate.	
2	Complete the Early Years Education and Care degree.	I will have received my results and have graduated in July 2026.	To complete this goal, I will ensure I submit work on time. I will always try my best with every piece of work I	Start 2.9.24. Aim to achieve by July 2026	My future job.	I am currently completing my second assignment on this course. I have attended	

No	Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?	Achievements (Progress so far)	Achievements (3-month Review)
			complete. I will make sure I attend all lectures.			every lecture so far.	
3	Undertake experience within the social care area of profession.	I will have spent time with a social care professional, in their work surroundings. I will have seen the way their day-to-day tasks work for them. Also, the challenges that they face.	To complete this, I will contact a local social care professional and request a couple of days' work experience with them.	Start 9.10.24. Aim to achieve by September 2025	A clearer understanding on what profession I would like to go into.	I have not yet taken any actions to start to achieve this goal.	
4	Start to read for fun.	I will know that I have achieved this when I have completed a couple	I will start to read at least five pages in bed every night. I will focus on just enjoying a book	Start 9.10.24. Aim to achieve by	I will find it easier to research certain topics	I have not yet taken any actions to start	

No	Improvement and Development Goals	Success Criteria (How I will know when I have made this change)	The actions I will take to achieve the goal	Timelines	What will this help me to achieve?	Achievements (Progress so far)	Achievements (3-month Review)
		of books that I have read for fun.	and not feeling pressured to read it, which leads me to not wanting to read it.	January 2025	when studying, it will also improve my literacy skills	to achieve this goal.	
5	Decide exactly what profession I want to go into	I will know I have decided this when I have completed my degree and have started to apply for jobs within a certain profession.	I will start to read into different job professions and gain further experience in these professions. I will talk to my lecturers and other support staff for further information.	Start 9.10.24. Aim to achieve by July 2026	My first professional job whilst having a degree.	I have not yet taken any actions to start to achieve this goal.	

Here I have created a personal development plan, this plan has allowed me to break down every goal I have into smaller pieces. In which it will enable me to know the actions I need to take to achieve a certain goal, and how I will know I have achieved it. My PDP also allowed me to set a realistic time limit in which I want to achieve these goals. Reflecting on my PDP, I feel I have made realistic targets for myself, and I think that I will be able reach and achieve all my goals in the time that I have set myself.

<u>What is reflection and reflective practice?</u> Reflection is the process of which you concentrate your thoughts and opinions on an experience which has occurred. You will look back on the experience chosen and analyse areas you felt went really well but also you will identify areas of improvement. Reflection is seen as a natural activity which is in day-to-day life (University of Hull, 2024). We reflect to evaluate our process of learning, to think critically about something that we have done, and also to better the experience if we were to do it again. Reflective thinking is a practitioners personal engagement with a reflective activity. (Appleby and Andrews, in Reed and Canning, 2012) talks about the process of reflective practice and that it involves reflective thinking, reflective learning and reflective action. Reflective thinking is when a professional is self-aware and critical about the experience, what went well and the areas for improvement. Reflective learning is when the professional has gained insight from the process of reflective thinking. Reflective action is when the professional applies what has been learnt from reflective thinking and reflective action. Reflection and reflective practice are included in within the core values that have a key role in professional training and in professional work. Both reflection and reflective practice are promoted within Early Years practice (Brock, 2015). Collaborative reflection is reflection on a different level which involves a number of people. It can involve other groups of EY practitioners, teachers, agencies and higher up organisations coming together to plan, execute, observe and evaluate (Durham University, no date) Within collaborative reflection, you might follow the Johari Window Model of reflection to help reflect on a deeper level.	<u>Why is reflective practice important to EY practice?</u> Reflective practice is important within the early years practice and their practitioners as it enables practitioners to develop a critical understanding of their practice (Birthto5matters, 2021). This involves critically thinking about the practice they deliver and seeing what is good about it and what needs to be changed in order to improve it. Reflective practice also increases confidence within the practitioner themselves and also confidence within their work. It will help the practitioner to become more proactive. Reflective practice helps to improve the quality of care provided within the EY sector. Most importantly, reflective practice keeps you up to date with practice. (Dahlberg et al, 2007), talks about how the early years is always changing by government policy, therefore the practitioners working in the early years need to constantly looking ahead to assure their practice is always changing in accordance. (Pacey, 2016) talks about how a reflective practitioner will celebrate their strengths and skills but will be able to acknowledge areas for improvement. A reflective practitioner will take professional responsibility for constantly improving their qualities, they will also critically think about what skills they use and how well do they work. Lastly a reflective practitioner will constantly consider what other ways they could work in.
<u>The theory of reflective practice:</u> A theory is someone's ideas/opinions which is recognised evidence that stands up to critics. These are two theories that explain reflective practice. John Dewey's reflection theory tends to relate to personal learning. His theory of reflection is extremely useful to make sense of a situation, involving recalling the event and posing questions to explore why certain things happened. John Dewey talks about reflection being a process that we do actively (University of Southampton, no date). John Dewey states "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads" (Dewey 1933 pg. 118). Within John Dewey's theory of reflective practice, he identified two types of action, routine action and reflective action. Routine action is when you are subconsciously doing something, for example if you are following a law or regulation, these actions are less likely to change. However reflective action is the willingness to be flexible when reflecting. You are aware of what went well but also your faults, therefore you will analyse these and decide what needs to be changed and what needs to stay the same. Donald Schon created a theory that was based on John Dewey's theory but focussing more on reflective practice. It is based on reflection on action and reflection in action. Reflection in action is the process of reflecting as something is happening, you are able to consider the situation and act immediately. Whereas reflecting on action is reflecting after something has happened, therefore you are able to reconsider the situation and think about what needs to be changed for next time. Reflecting on action is there to help practitioners improve their practice (University of Southampton, no date). "The reflective practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation" (Schon, 2016).	
<u>Gibbs' Model of Reflection</u>  <pre> graph TD Description --> Feelings Feelings --> Evaluation Evaluation --> Analysis Analysis --> Conclusion Conclusion --> ActionPlan[Action Plan] ActionPlan --> Description </pre>	<u>ERA Cycle of Reflection</u> (Source: University of Edinburgh, 2020)  <pre> graph TD Experience --> Reflection Reflection --> Action Action --> Experience </pre>
<u>Analysis of models –</u> The ERA reflective cycle is seen as a simple and easy way to reflect, it only consists of three stages which are experience, reflection and action. We can simply talk about the experience of something and state what has happened, then we can actually reflect on how it went and how you feel afterwards, then lastly take action and make the changes needed for next time. These changes that are made will then result in a new experience and you begin the cycle again (Jasper, 2013). One weakness for this model of reflection is that you might not always go into a lot of detail regarding your experience, therefore you might not be reflecting fully on what has happened. Gibb's reflective cycle is a more complex reflective cycle, it has six stages which are description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. Having six stages that you need to analyse, can help you reflect deeper into the experience because you are able to think about your emotions during the experience and after the experience. This is key when reflecting. Within the Gibb's model of reflection, you create an action plan. This helps you to break down exactly what you want to change next time, and how you plan to do so. Some people might find this reflective cycle to complex and time consuming. As you are breaking your reflection down into six stages, practitioners who are reflecting daily, might not have the time to break it down into six stages therefore sticking to a simple three stages might be more useful (Gibbs, 1998).	
<u>Conclusion -</u> This briefing paper has discussed the meaning of reflection and reflective practice. It has explored the importance of reflective practice within the Early Years and what it means to be a reflective practitioner. The briefing paper has also explained Dewey's and Schon's theories of reflection, followed by the analysis of two reflective models, The ERA model of reflection and Gibb's Model of Reflection.	

Briefing Paper

Written Essay

Recognise and analyse the significance of different aspects of professional practice and why these are important in meeting the individual and inclusive needs of children.

The meaning of a 'professional' has been discussed with different perceptions and concepts of what a professional actually is (Perez, 2019). Farhadi et al., (2021) discusses 'professional self-concept' as a complex concept that involves cognition, personal understanding, role development and professional behaviour. Similarly, Perez (2019) acknowledges that professionalism is 'attitude based' involving social and behavioural factors, therefore the 'professional self-image' is the responsibility of the individual. Professional practice is therefore the practice carried out by the professional. The practice should include following policies, effective communication, effective teamwork, confident practitioners and practitioners who lead by example. It is important as Early Years professionals, no matter what qualifications you have/experiences, having the best interests of the child at the heart of your work is the most important – article 3 UNCRC. Hyson and Tomlinson (2014) suggest that any professional that works with children hold specific roles, skills and functions regardless of what your role is. Early Years Professionals require a specific in-depth knowledge and understanding of early childhood as well as specific skills to be successful early years professionals. An Early Years professional must be nurturing, loving, patient, respectful, resilient and empathetic, in order to give the child the best possible practice.

Johansson and Einarsdottir (2018) says that values are principles that guide human actions and judgements of whether actions are desirable or not. Early years professionals have core values which include respect, fairness, teamwork, relationships, vision, success, social awareness and personal development. Powell (2010) outlined values that are vital within the early years, these include having a genuine liking for and interest in children and their development, good communication skills, confidence, patience and professionalism, a helpful caring 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 and a sense of fun. Gasper (2015) discusses that within the early years there is a larger importance of the qualities an individual demonstrates in practice, with or without formal qualifications. Emphasis is placed on 'principled practice' which is value-based and ethics-driven, prioritising the needs of children and parents. Including, understanding and respecting family beliefs and differences, record keeping of key events which take place, transferring relative information to the right places and collaborative work (multi-agency). Once these values are integrated with theoretical knowledge and an understanding of a child's holistic development, they create an ideal professional committed to best practices.

Dunhill (2009) says that "good communication is central to working with children, young people, their families and carers. It is a fundamental part of the Common Core. It involves listening, questioning, understanding and responding to what is being communicated by children, young people and those caring for them". Non-verbal communication is also vital within early years practice. It includes things like human communication, tone and pitch, nonverbal body language, eye contact, posture and body positioning. It is important that early years professionals have the correct tone of voice when speaking to a child or parent, ensuring they know you are speaking to them with respect and you are calm. It is also important that you are able to maintain eye-contact to show that you are engaged in the conversation. An early years professional should always be dressed appropriately and smartly (Orey, 2014). Brain and Nukherji (2005) talks about how non-verbal cues can contradict verbal messages. This could mean you comforting a child verbally but by raising your voice at them, this could confuse the child leaving them not knowing whether you are trying to comfort them or tell them off. An important part of working as an early years practitioner involves building positive relationships with children and young people, families and carers, colleagues and other professionals. Therefore it is important for an early years practitioner to have effective communication skills.

Early years professionals have to work alongside a list of different professionals, such as social workers, play workers, flying start workers, health visitors, counsellors, CIW and Estyn. This is important when meeting the specific needs of a child as you might have to contact other professionals to assist the child. Gasper (2009) talks about how each profession will have specific training within a specialist area, therefore the child might need assistance within a specific area. For example if

you become aware of any concerns for a child at home, this might be concerns for the parent or carer in charge of looking after the child, you might have to contact social services in order to get the help the child needs.

As early years professionals, it is vital you have in-depth knowledge to be able to perform the best practice. Practitioners will have undertaken safeguarding and child protection training in order to keep each child safe. The NSPCC (2021) shows the significant time of events in history. In 1989, the Children Act for England and Wales was created, Children Act by the UNCRC was created in 2004 and in 2019 the Child Protection Procedures were made. The Welsh Government have 7 core aims for children and young people based upon the UNCRC and children's rights for Wales. These 7 aims are: have a flying start in life, have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities, enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, have access to play, are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised, have a safe home and are not disadvantaged by poverty (Children in Wales, 2024).

Welsh Government (2022) discusses that observations should play a key role in the everyday practice of practitioners working with children, observations inform the planning process. When a practitioner is observing a child, they are able to collect information on the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development and also analyse the child's achievements, likes and dislikes. These observations can be planned or unexpected, early years practitioners should use a range of observation techniques. Going forward they are able to identify steps which are needed to be put in place for that child. Observations also play a part in the safeguarding process and identifying any changes in behaviour or appearance which might be a cause for concern. The Welsh Government also sets out the child development observation cycle. It has three parts to it, the first being 'notice' which is when the practitioner acknowledges the child's interests, fascinations, emotions and levels of involvement. Next is 'analyse' which is when the practitioner is able to reflect on what they have discovered in the first step. Lastly, 'respond' which when the practitioner informs current and future planning of experiences and environment. Observations are important to understand how a child learns through play and real experiences rather than pictures and representations.

In 1924, The League of Nations adopted the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which was drafted by Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of the Save the Children Fund. The Declaration expresses that all people owe children the right to: means for their development, special help in times of need, priority for relief, economic freedom and protection from exploitation (United Nations, 2015). In 1989 The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and widely acclaimed as a huge achievement for human rights, recognising the roles of the children as social, emotional political, civil and cultural actors. The convention guidelines are minimum standards for protecting children. The UNCRC has 54 articles spread into four broad categories: the right to life, the right to develop, the right to be protected and the right to participate. Article 3 states that the best interests of the child must be at the heart of everything you do as early years professionals, this also being a core value for early years professionals (Unicef, 2016). Planning in the foundation phase is all based on the rights of the child. It is split into 3 sections, the focused task, enhanced provision and continuous provision. Focused task are set/planned activities that teaches a new skill to a child, for example maths and literacy in school. This is underpinned by the best interest of the child (article 3), children have the right to education. Enhanced provision is extending resources of interest to children to meet a theme or to inspire the child's learning. This is promoted by article 12 and listening to the voice of the child. Lastly continuous provision is every day long term planning of engaging activities for a child. This is based on every child having the right to play and take part in a range of activities which is article 31. In Wales, the UNCRC was adopted by Welsh government and are outlined in Welsh law. The measure also makes ministers responsible for ensuring that people in Wales know about, understand and respect the rights for children and young people as outlined in Article 42 of the UNCRC (Welsh Assembly Government, 2015).

To conclude, this essay has defined the term 'professional practice' and has explored the different aspects of professional practice analysing the importance of these different aspects. This essay has covered many things that contribute towards meeting the needs of a child, such as effective communication, multi-agency work and the rights of the child.

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ECEY4009

2404369

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