

ECEY4009

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Professional Practitioner Portfolio

Component 1- Personal Development Plan

Component 2- Briefing paper- reflective practise

Component 3- Written Essay

component one- personal development plan.

No.	Development and improvement goals.	Success criteria.	Actions needed to complete this goal.	Timelines.	What will this help me achieve?
1	<i>To complete my degree in early years education and care</i>	When I receive my degree when graduating. All my assignments will be complete, and I will be preparing to begin my PGCE>	I need to attend all lecturers, during these lectures I will make effective notes, and ask any important questions needed to do with the module or assignments. I will use my good time management and brilliant researching skills to make sure all my assignments are completed properly and submitted on time.	I aim to complete this goal by July 2026, when I will be graduating and receiving my degree.	This goal will contribute to completing my qualified Teacher Status meaning I can become a primary school teacher as I need this degree to begin my PGCE. Aswell as assisting in my goal of gaining knowledge on children with additional learning needs as I will complete effective research.
2	<i>To gain knowledge on children with additional learning needs</i>	When I am fully confident in dealing with certain situations with a child with ALN and can continuously produce new ideas to support and engage children with ALN	To look through the training menu my workplace provide to find courses that are relevant to learning about ALN children and take part in the training. I will also continue working with children with various additional learning needs to gain as much knowledge and experience I can get.	I aim to complete this goal within the next 2 years. However, I want to continuously gain knowledge and experience while working as an early year's practitioner.	Accomplishing this goal will allow me to better myself as an early year's practitioner while working with ALN children. This also helps me for the future for when I have my own class which could include children with ALN I will be confident and can effectively accommodate to that child's needs and behaviours.
3	To become a primary school teacher	When my PGCE is complete, and I have been accepted a job to begin as a primary school teacher.	Firstly, I need to complete goal one of getting my degree in early years education and care. Then I plan to do my PGCE in early years while working within a school. During this I will gain experience in many different school settings. Lastly, I will have to prepare myself for job interviews to get a position as a Primary school teacher.	This goal should be completed by September 2026.	Completing this goal will contribute to goal 2 as I will be working with children from a different perspective than a Teaching Assistant which may further my understanding and experience with ALN children. It will allow me to gain more confidence, experience knowledge and ideas as I grow my career.

What is Reflection and reflective practise?

Reflection and reflective practise are fundamental principles for professionals and play a crucial role in their work. These practices are maintained in various fields, especially education, healthcare and social care. Reflective practise is essential in achieving effective professional development.(Brock, 2015). Reflective practise involves critically thinking and evaluating your work to challenge, adapt, develop, refine and improve it. This process should be continuous, fostering an ongoing cycle of reflection and improvement.(Pacey, 2016). A successful practitioner is someone who will also look back at specific elements like their education setting, planning and tasks set throughout the day and take into consideration what worked and what went wrong(birhtto5matters, 2021). Collaborative or collective reflection unlocks new levels of critical reflection. This entails any level practitioners collaborating to plan, observe and assess a lesson.(Durham university, no date).

Why is reflective practise important as an early year's practitioner.

Reflective Practice as a practitioner allows one to enhance a deeper understanding of their own practise. This will help practitioners build the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to achieve top development, learning and progress for children they are working with. It will also enhance practitioner confidence, encourages a proactive approach, and overall improves the quality of the education and care offered (birthto5matters, 2021). Reflective practise is a process through which individuals or teams become more aware of the underlying values that influence their day-by-day actions. This awareness is particularly important when addressing matters of quality or diversity. When working in an environment that embraces an open mind and willingness to learn, reflective practise becomes more effective as professional development(Lindon and Trodd, 2016). Johari Window explores collaborative reflection, this is particularly important when working as an early years practitioner. This technique is a communication tool designed to enhance team interaction and effectiveness by allowing individuals to gain clearer insight into their own traits. This is important as it encourages personal growth within group dynamics in a positive and constructive manner (Stein, 2015, p31).

Theory of reflection.

Donald Schon (nd) believes reflective practise is differentiating between reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action is reflecting as a situation is happening, using their knowledge as it's happening and acting immediately. However, reflection on action is an intentional process carried out after a situation to gain insight and learn from the experience. Apart of Schon's theory is called double-loop learning, which relates to the phrase, "thinking outside the box". In contrast, double loop learning involves questioning and challenging the underlying assumptions or rules to achieve a better outcome than what would be possible by staying within the current restrictions. Schon's theory offers numerous advantages, it means that reflective practice has evolved beyond a purely retrospective process and can now be integrated into on-the-job activities. This approach allows practitioners to engage in deeper reflection by questioning their own assumptions and biases. Furthermore, it helps to explain the intuitive decision making of experienced professionals, who often act effectively without fully understanding the reasons behind their actions. Additionally, this form of reflection offers significant benefits for practitioners with limited time, as it allows them to reflect during their work, even when they are unable to do so immediately after a situation (Schon, no date).

Driscoll's model



Driscoll Model of Reflection

NursingAnswers.net

Gibbs' model



Gibbs' reflective cycle, developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988, is a structured approach for learning from experience, especially useful for analysing recurring situations. The model comprises six stages: describing the experience, reflecting on feelings and thoughts, evaluating positive and negative aspects, analysing the context, drawing the conclusions about lessons learned and developing an action plan for future scenarios.(University of Edinburgh, no date.) In contrast, Driscoll's model, known as the 'Three what's?' is based on Terry Borton's questions: 'What?' 'So what?' and 'Now what?' This framework allows individuals to analyse their experiences by first describing the situation for context, then reflecting on lessons learned. Finally, it encourages consideration of potential actions, such as changing behaviour, trying something new, or maintaining the status quo. It is important to recognise that feeling satisfied with current practises is a valid outcome, and not every reflection will lead to change (university of Cambridge, no date.) Gibbs' cycle offers several advantages and disadvantages. It's six stages provide a structured, methodical approach that enhances self-awareness and holistic learning, allowing individuals to reflect on their experiences and identify strengths and areas for development. Its adaptability across various fields makes it a versatile tool for both professional and personal growth. However, the model can oversimplify complex experiences, potentially limiting in-depth analysis. Its reliance on subjective perceptions may lead to varying interpretations, while the process can be time consuming. Additionally, an excessive focus on emotions may hinder objective analysis, and its informal nature may not suit all professional environments (Greenwalt, 2023) The primary advantage of Driscoll's model of reflective practise is the simplicity, breaking down reflection into just three accessible questions. This streamlined approach enhances accessibility across diverse groups, making it an ideal introduction to self-reflection and laying a foundation for engagement with more complex models. However, just like Gibbs' model, this simplicity can limit depth, as it may lead to superficial reflections that overlook ethical considerations and professional standards and may not encourage challenging assumptions. As well as Gibbs' model, with terminology tailored for clinical settings, it may lack relevance in fields like education or early childhood development.(study prism, no date.)

In conclusion, reflective practise is crucial for professional growth, enabling individuals to critically evaluate their experiences and enhance their skills. By fostering self-awareness and adaptability, it encourages continuous learning and improvement (Schön, 1983.) Additionally, reflective practise contributes to collaborative effectiveness within teams, leading to more innovative solutions (Dewey, 1910.) Ultimately, integrating reflection into professional routines is essential for navigating challenges and achieving sustained competence in dynamic environments.

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Component Three - written essay.

Professional practise in early years education refers to the application of specialised knowledge, skills and ethical standards required to support young children's learning and development effectively. A professional in early childhood education not only possesses expertise in teaching practises and child development but also demonstrates a commitment to the wellbeing, rights, and diverse needs of each child. As defined by Taggart (2011, p.86), professionalism in early years is about "being reflective, autonomous, and responsible with a focus on improving children's outcomes". This means early childhood professionals must be thoughtful, adaptable, and accountable, continually refining their practices to foster a positive and nurturing environment. This essay will explore the essential qualities of professional practise in early years education and why these standards are vital for fostering safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate learning environments.

Values play a crucial role in professional practice, guiding practitioners in their interactions and decision-making processes. Social justice, which emphasises equal economic, political, and social rights for all, underpins the ethical responsibilities of professionals to advocate for equitable opportunities (Rawls, 1971). Trust and respect foster authentic relationships, demonstrating care for the needs and feelings of others while honouring the finite resources of our natural world (Covey, 2003). Integrity is fundamental, as it reflects a commitment to honesty and adherence to strong moral principles, ensuring that practitioners act ethically and responsibly (Kernis, 2003, p.1-26). Additionally, a professional commitment to ongoing learning and to the improvement of learner aligns with the goal of creating a sustainable and equitable future (Senge, 2006). Together, these values not only enhance the quality of professional practice but also contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and communities.

According to Dunhill et al. (2009), communication and relationships are essential to professional practice, forming the foundation for understanding and meeting the unique needs of children and young people. Effective communication fosters trust and collaboration, enabling practitioners to actively listen and address concerns. Strong relationships with children, families, and colleagues enhance the overall

support system, ensuring that interventions are tailored and effective, which leads to better outcomes. Research by Hattie (2009) emphasizes that parental and carer involvement in children's learning is crucial for success, regardless of socio-economic background. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, collaboration with parents often begins with visits to the educational setting, offering insights into how to help children settle in. Prioritizing the perspectives of parents allows practitioners to understand each child's distinct context and encourages the sharing of family and community culture. Recognizing parents as the child's first educators enhances the educational journey. Actively involving parents fosters ownership and teamwork, especially when they participate during the settling-in process. This collaborative approach enables sharing insights about children's interests and learning styles, leading to tailored support that meets individual needs and goals, creating a nurturing environment for holistic development. (Department for Education, 2021). Effective communication and strong relationships with children are also vital components as they play a crucial role in meeting the diverse needs of young learners. Research shows that positive interactions between educators and children foster emotional security, which enhances engagement and learning outcomes (Pianta et al., 2009). When children feel understood and valued, they are more likely to participate actively in their education and explore their interests (Hattie, 2009). Furthermore, establishing a rapport with children enables educators to identify individual needs and tailor their teaching strategies, accordingly, thereby supporting each child's developmental journey (McWayne et al., 2008). By prioritising communication and building trusting relationships, educators create a nurturing environment that not only promotes academic success but also supports children's social and emotional development.

Having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of child development, educational practices and safeguarding is crucial to professional practice in early childhood education. This expertise enables educators to recognise and address the diverse needs of children effectively, ensuring their safety and well-being. The department for education (2022), suggests a thorough understanding of safeguarding policies is vital for identifying signs of abuse or neglect, which is essential for protecting vulnerable children. Expanding on this, the welfare of children is of paramount importance, and those in need of support and protection deserve timely and effective assistance. A

responsive system should prioritise the needs and interests of children and families, rather than the other way around. The children acts of 1989 and 2003 outline these responsibilities: section 17 mandates that local authorities provide services for children in need, while section 47 requires inquiries when there is concern about significant harm to a child. Effective delivery of these duties relies on the cooperation of various partners, as outlined in section 10, which emphasises the need for collaborative arrangements to enhance the well-being of children in the community. The children act 2004, amended by the children and social act 2017, further reinforces this collaboration among key agencies, ensuring that all professionals play a vital role in safeguarding children (HM Government, 2018.) Furthermore, knowledge of developmental milestones allows practitioners to create tailored learning experiences that foster each child's growth (early years foundation stage, 2002). Ultimately, comprehensive knowledge not only enhances teaching strategies but also safeguards children's rights, ensuring a nurturing and secure educational environment.

Partnerships and multi-agency working are essential components of professional practice in early childhood education and safeguarding, as they facilitate a comprehensive approach to meeting the diverse needs of children and families. Effective collaboration among various professionals, such as educators, health practitioners, social workers, and local authorities, ensures that support is comprehensive and coordinated (department for education, 2021). This integrated approach promotes timely information sharing, which is crucial for identifying risks and implementing appropriate interventions (Ofsted, 2020). The children act 2004 mandates local authorities to foster cooperation among agencies, highlighting the importance of working together to improve children's well-being (HM government, 2021). Furthermore, multi-agency collaboration enhances the expertise available to practitioners, allowing them to address complex issues more effectively (Fauth et al., 2019). Research indicates that such partnerships lead to improved outcomes for children, as services are better aligned to their needs (Henderson et al., 2022). By building strong relationships among professionals and engaging with families, multi-agency working not only supports children's development but also empowers parents and caregivers, fostering a nurturing environment that promotes growth and well-being.

Practitioners working with children must understand child development and individual needs. By carefully observing children's progress, involvement and enjoyment, educators can create a tailored curriculum that supports each child's growth. These observations reveal how children's skills are developing and provide insights into their knowledge, preferences, and abilities. While not all observations have a predetermined aim, daily monitoring yields valuable information for future planning. The data collected helps practitioners highlight individual strengths and identify areas for progress, including those who may require additional support under the Special Educational Needs framework. Furthermore, the planning phase allows practitioners to set clear objectives based on their observations, facilitating the creation of inclusive environments that support diverse learning styles (Department of education, 2021). Moreover, regular reflection on the effectiveness of planned activities helps practitioners refine their strategies and improve outcomes for children (Nutbrown, 2012). Overall, the observation and planning cycle promotes a responsive educational framework, ensuring that practitioners effectively meet the evolving needs of children in their care.

The principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child profoundly inform professional practice in early childhood education by establishing a framework centred on children's rights. These principles emphasise the inherent dignity and worth of every child, highlighting their right to participation, protection, and provision (UNICEF, 2021). By integrating these principles into practice, professionals can create inclusive environments that respect children's voices and promote their active involvement in decision-making processes. This approach is essential as it empowers children, fostering their confidence and sense of agency (Davis, 2017). Moreover, adherence to the UNCRC supports the safeguarding and welfare of children, ensuring that their rights are upheld and that they are protected from harm (department of education, 2021). The importance of these principles extends beyond legal compliance, they shape a culture of respect and understanding, enhancing the quality of care and education provided. By prioritizing children's rights, practitioners not only contribute to their holistic development but also help cultivate a society that values and respects the rights of all children.

In conclusion, professional practice in early years education is fundamentally guided by a commitment to the rights and needs of children, as encapsulated in frameworks

such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Understanding child development, fostering strong relationships, and maintaining ethical standards are vital for creating inclusive and nurturing learning environments. By actively observing and planning tailored curricula, practitioners can effectively address each child's unique strengths and challenges. Additionally, the emphasis on collaboration through multi-agency working enhances the support available to children and families, ensuring comprehensive care. Ultimately, a focus on these principles not only promotes children's well-being and development but also cultivates a society that upholds and respects the rights of every child, laying the foundation for their future success.

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