Part 1 - Personal Development Plan – Kelly Watkinson

I currently work within the Childcare sector, caring for, teaching and developing young children. I am specialised in Additional Learning Needs children, which leads me to my current qualifications: Level 3 Children's Care, Learning and development; Level 2 Playworker certificate and a Level 1 Makaton Qualification.				
Objectives	**Actions**	**Resources**	**Target Date**	**Success Criteria**
Attend Safeguarding Level 3 Course.	Request additional time off to increase study time, improving the quality and quantity of research I can achieve. Locate a suitable course which provides this qualification and the certification that is required.	Organising my time management factoring in both study and travel to the facility. Attending the course requires travelling.	The current Study week for this term is February 2024. This is reviewed every three years.	I will know I have been successful in this target when I have completed the course and I have gained a certificate.
Complete Degree in Early Years Education and Care.	To complete my degree, I attend all lectures and complete all assignments given by the educational staff. I carry out both primary and secondary research IAW guidelines given to me, using different resources available.	I have multiple resources available to me which I will be using to cite my evidence and use as references for my essay further on. Using books from the library I will be able to find sources relating to the topics I am studying and relevant to the degree; alongside the library, I have access to the internet which will allow me a broader spectrum of sources to learn and cite from.	The end of my degree is stated as June 2025 (Graduation) , this leaves me two years to complete the course which I feel is ample time.	I will know I have been successful in this aim when I have gained an in-depth knowledge of Early Years Education and Care, and I will have attended graduation.

Attend and complete Makaton 2 Course.	To find a suitable course which will further develop my level 1 Makaton into Level 2, I will be required to find a suitable location to learn this skill and with an adequate time frame as I also work full-time.	The courses are both online and in person, attending either face to face or online would be a beneficial resource to acquiring this qualification and further improve my skill set.	I am aiming for December 2024 as my target date for achieving level 2 in Makaton which will tie in well for my degree and my career.	I will know I have been successful in this target when I have attended the course, have a better knowledge of Makaton and I have gained a certificate.

Part 2 - Briefing paper

What is reflection

Reflection is having the ability to reevaluate previous events or experiences and consider what could have been done alternatively or how it could be improved.

Reflection is used in a variety of situations within childcare ranging from poor observation (Children are not listening/ lost interest) to dealing with a confrontational parent (Concerns).

Reflection is a key component in both adult and child development, teaching children early on through guidance can be a strong reinforcement for learning, if taught from a young age it is possible to increase the comprehension of right and wrong, improvements in cognitive skills , leadership and others.

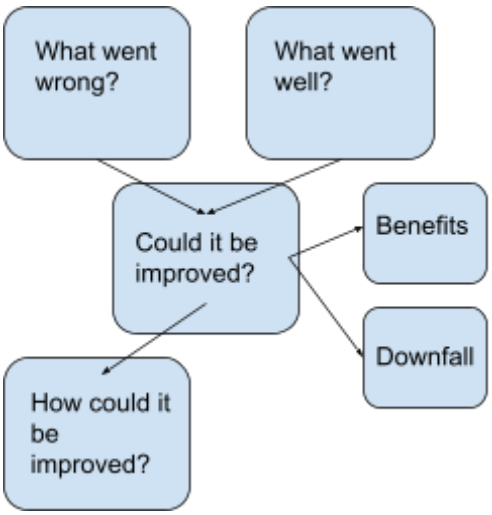
This can be testified by the case study found on the EY Alliance website: LINK

What Reflective practise

Reflective practice can be defined by PACEY as “the process of thinking about and analysing your practice, with the aim of challenging, changing, modifying, developing and improving it. This should be a continuous cycle of reflection and improvement”.

The term reflective practice is important for practitioners because it allows evaluation and analysis after the event which allows for improvement or rectification. There are many scenarios which can be related to this term, in line with childcare some examples are often used relating to the development of children or the improvement of staff and their abilities.

An example scenario which is widely supported through multiple sources is that of growth and rectification. The said practitioner has prepared, executed and concluded a teaching/training session with young children, however in this instance the children became unsettled and disruptive during the session, this would be a perfect time for **reflection** putting this into effect could go like this:



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Why is reflective practice important to Early Years practice?

Birth to 5 Matters suggests that being a reflective practitioner is important because it gives practitioners the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills of their own practice and environments. This is good, effective practice as it results in constantly trying to improve and develop their skill sets in the ever changing environment and improving attributes such as time management, teaching and social skills.

The theory of reflective practise

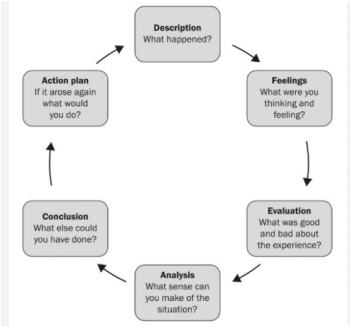
The theory of reflective practice is widely sourced and documented across the academic world, spanning through all areas of academia and life; it is applied both professionally and personally as a way to ensure growth within the two sectors. According to the open university John Dewey was known for some of the earliest thesis on reflective practice. Dewey believed that there are two types of action in Reflective practice, Routine and Reflective. Routine action is a fixed action which is carried out the same each time. Reflective action is where a practitioner is constantly questioning their practice and giving self appraisal. Dewey believed that reflection should be part of a learning process which should be done intentionally not complaisantly. Dewey (1933) says “Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitute reflective thought”. Donald Schon believes the reflective practice is split into two parts Reflection on Action, which would be done afterward and applied to future practice and Reflection in Action, which would be done in the moment where any changes can be implicated in the moment.

How it is described/used

Reflection can be described as an ongoing exercise, often reviewed. It can be reviewed in the moment and adapted during the activity or it could be reviewed after in a planning session or team meeting amongst staff. It can be an individual exercise or done collaboratively. It is believed that some benefits to doing it individually would be being able to improve in ways which are personal to you and your practice. On the other hand, cons may be not having other thoughts and opinions on how best to improve as you would have if you were to reflect within a group. Reflection can be split into 3 areas; Reflective thinking, Reflective action and reflective learning.

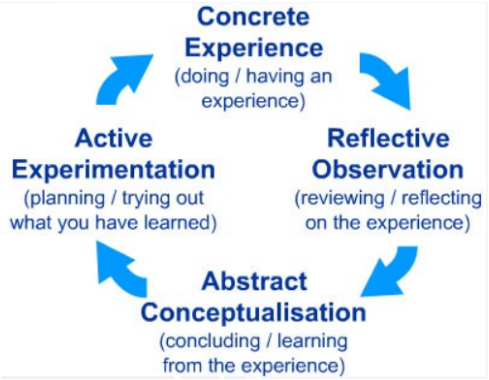
Analysis of Models - Compare / Contrast / Pros / Cons

Gibbs cycle of Reflection



Gibb's cycle of reflection is a six step cycle in which is used to reflect. The steps are; Description (what happened), Feelings (what were you thinking/feeling?), Evaluation (What was good and bad?), Analysis, Conclusion (changes) and Action plan. A positive aspect of using this cycle is that it is the only cycle which considers the feelings of the practitioner. This cycle is an effective, in depth cycle which allows you to think about the experience in a detailed manner. The negative side of this cycle is that it is a long cycle and may need additional time set aside to reflect in this manner effectively.

Kolb's Experiential cycle of reflection



Kolb's Model of Reflection places emphasis on the value of reflection. The steps taken in Kolb's cycle of reflection are; Concrete Experience (creating/ experiencing the experience), Reflective Observation (reviewing/reflecting on the experience), Abstract Conceptualisation (What the practitioner has learned from the experience), Active Experimentation (Experimenting with what was learned). A

positive of using this cycle is it contains only a few steps so it would be easy for a practitioner to use it in the moment and very little additional time would be needed to complete this Model of Reflection afterwards. A negative point of this cycle may be that it may not make the practitioner reflect upon the feelings of the experience and this model may not be suitable for all situations.

One difference between these two models is Gibb's model has more steps and has a more detailed reflection. It also considers the feelings of the practitioner in the moment. Another difference between the two models is, Kolb's model of reflection has less steps and may be more suitable to be used in the moment of the experience to change whilst carrying out if needed.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, there are different Models of Reflection for Practitioners to consider. It is important that a practitioner finds a model of reflection which suits them and their practice. Some practitioners may benefit from different Models of Reflection at different times, depending on how much time has been allocated to do this. It is pivotal for practitioners to remember that Reflective Practice should be an ongoing part of practice and should be reviewed regularly.

Part 3 - Recognising and analysing the significance of different aspects of professional practice and why these are important in meeting the individual and inclusive needs of the children.

The definition of a professional practitioner varies between each individual. A good indicator of a professional practitioner can be seen in the attitude and behaviour displayed within the profession. The standard of a practitioner is dictated and guided by the **National Minimum Standard for Non-maintained Nursery Settings**, **United Nations Convention of The Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** and finally **workplace code of conduct**. Aspects of each mentioned above form a standard of practition which is enforced and abided by childcare establishments.

What values are important and why are values important

The profession of childcare requires and follows a **Code of Ethics** which is referenced by PACEY (No Date) which outlines the principles and values for childcare practitioners, these are as followed:

- Honesty - Integrity
- Reliability - Accountability
- Respectfulness - Objectivity

These values are of core importance when working especially within the childcare sector, each holds its own importance when dealing with either children, family or colleagues.

Honesty : This is one of the most crucial values when communicating with all of the above, as it creates trust and **reliability**, this binds with **integrity** because it keeps you inline with the values above showing you to be a reliable person who can be held **accountable** for any decisions you make.

Objectivity : Being unbiased and taking an objective outside view allows for the practitioner to make decisions that are fair and leading to them being a **respectful** member of the team, displaying professionalism and transparency at all times.

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

Communication is a key function in building a healthy personal and work relation with children and adults. Being a strong communicator allows the practitioner to use a wide variety of communicational skills to overcome different barriers that could arise showing good versatility. For example, linguistic barriers, additional learning needs (Autistic, Speech Impediments, Sign language) however it is not limited to these.

Being able to assess children's body language and respond with the appropriate body language requires a good knowledge of the child and communication skills, the factors above are pivotal for meeting the educational and care the children require to develop. This can also apply when dealing with families and other members of staff. It is also vital that practitioners are weary of the language being used, ensuring it is appropriate for the intended audience.

Why is having an in-depth knowledge and understanding important to professional practice, include safeguarding

Having in-depth knowledge and understanding in childcare is paramount to carrying out a practitioner's duties. By having this knowledge and understanding it allows practitioners to provide a child centred approach. By providing a child centred approach, it allows practitioners the opportunity to know the child on a deeper level and allow them to learn in a way suitable for them. Another benefit of knowing the children well, is being able to notice any unusual changes in their behaviour. It is important to notice changes in behaviour as this could be an indicator that they are experiencing abuse and spotting signs of abuse of any type is crucial, any and all types of abuse could have a detrimental effect on the child and their development which comes under safeguarding. The NSPCC describes abuse to be a recurring or one off event in which an adult or child is intending to cause harm to a child.

Why is partnerships and multiagency working important to professional practice

Multi-agency partnership allows for growth of learning between practitioners, providing and exchanging the varied skill sets and expertise of those outside of the childcare setting or specific practice; this is referenced by SAGE PUBLICATIONS and a shared conesus with PACEY.
Other than promoting growth of experience, it allows practitioners the necessary exposure to other elements of a child's welfare and safeguarding outside of the normal remit of the practice such as Police, Social Services, Doctors and other Local Authorities, all factors which are relevant and important to a professional childcare practitioner and childcare setting.

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

Observation when creating a plan cycle go hand and hand, by observing the mental, emotional and physical capabilities of the children a practitioner is able to ensure they are meeting the needs of the child in all aspects. For example, if a child is struggling with cognitive activities; the practitioner should observe and reflect on this matter. They are able to plan and execute an activity to increase the exposure and scaffold their development, increasing the child's abilities and the professional practice capability.

Different settings may require different approaches when planning, some settings are planned weekly, some termly and some take other approaches such as the '*Anna Ephgrave approach*' which outlines planning in the moment which consists of having a planned and resourced environment.

How do the principles of the uncrc inform professional practice and why is this so imprtant

The UNCRC is the pinnacle and basis of child welfare and rights. The government have incorporated the 54 articles into the guidelines and standards they set. In an *article authored by Professor Eva Lievens, University of Ghent;* it states : " ***The UNCRC embodies the idea that every child should be recognised, respected and protected as a rights holder and as a unique and valuable human being. It applies to all persons under the age of 18."***

There are 54 Articles of Children's rights that MUST be adhered to by practitioners leading into why the UNCRC principles are so important within the practice of Childcare.

The UNCRC covers children's rights, welfare and safeguarding the principles include:

- Non-discrimination - The Best interest of the Child
- Right to be heard - Right to Life and Development

These are the four pillars of principles that keep the integrity and implementation of all rights within the UNCRC. Article 3 in the UNCRC, "Adults should always do what is best for you", is paramount in everything practitioners do.

In conclusion, there are many valuable aspects which contribute to being a Professional Practitioner. A Professional Practitioner will make it a necessity and will take it upon themselves to better their practice. It is vital for practitioners to have good values, effective communication and an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the childcare setting. Pairing this alongside with the important ability to develop a good partnership with multi-agency workers is key to being a Professional Practitioner.