

Title: The professional practitioner ECEY4009

No AI was used for this portfolio

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What do I know already? I know that I would like to become a teacher. To do this I know I need to do a PGCE course. I will need to get a C grade in both GCSE maths and science to do this. What have I learnt so far? I have learnt that I need to gain relevant qualifications to further my career and achieve my dream job as a teacher. What do I want to develop? I need to develop my skills to get adequate grades to get onto courses to further my career. I would also like to further my education in British sign language so I can work confidently with children that are hard of hearing or deaf and work more inclusively.				
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?)
To gain a C grade in maths GCSE	I have enrolled on a GCSE maths course. I need to ensure I attend all lectures and do additional work at home.	I need to read the extra work sheets given to me by my lecturer and take out books from the library to support my studies.	Jul 2025	I will know when the results are released.
To gain a C grade in science GCSE	I have enrolled on a GCSE science equivalency course with the university of south Wales. I need to attend all lectures and carry out my at home research to further develop my knowledge.	I need to go over course material weekly to ensure I understand the topic as this course is fast paced.	December 2024	I will know when the results are released.
To get into a PGCE course and graduate	I need to have gained both GCSEs previously mentioned and graduate with a high enough grade from this degree to get onto a PGCE course.	I need to ensure I attend all lectures and do additional research outside of class. I also need to make sure I get my assignments in on time and do my best on all my assignments to ensure I get good grades	July 2026	I will find out once I graduate my degree in regards to my grade for my degree.

To gain a level 2 British sign language qualification	I need to research where and when this course is available locally for this qualification and apply. I would like to do this while doing my PGCE.	I may need to recap on my previously gained British Sign Language level 1 qualification, as I done this qualification in 2015 and possibly retake the classes to refresh my memory.	July 2027	I would need to take the relevant exams. When I pass this I will receive a certificate.
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What is reflection and reflective practise?

Reflection and reflective practice is very beneficial in the early years profession. PACEY (2016) states that reflective practice is the development of cognition about examining an individuals practice, with the goal of challenging, adapting, developing and refining it. Reflection and improvement should be a nonstop cycle.

Brock (2015) suggests that reflective practice should produce mindfulness to improve practice. Reflection and reflective practice are essential principles of professionals and have an important function in professional training. Reflection is indorsed in various ways, especially in education, health and social care and is a vital fragment of professional practice.

Why is reflective practise important to early years practise?

It is a well-known fact that reflective practice is highly Important in the early years profession. According to birth to five matters (2021) it is imperative for practitioners to reflect on their practice. This enables practitioners to develop a critical understanding of their individual practice. Reflective practice also helps practitioners to develop their confidence and be more proactive. When reflecting within the early years it develops opportunities for practitioners to improve their skills, understanding and knowledge. While reflecting practitioners are refining the quality of education and care they offer their charges.

Hopkins (2018. P67) states that the ability to reflect is imperative as this enhances learning experiences. Effective learning is gained by looking back on experiences and evaluating the significance of how actions carried out can impact situations.

The theory of reflective practise:

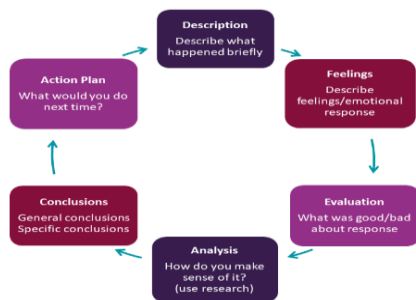
The founder of the theory of reflective practice is thought to be John Dewey, this was later built on by Donald Schön. John Dewey theorised that reflection in a learning understanding is not only inert recollection of an event but a thoughtful and vigorous method.

According to Lindon (2016. p51) Dewey indorsed a vigorous procedure of 'reflective thinking' and compared this with an inert process of just accommodating information as it is given. Hallet (2013. p31) states that Dewey (1933) acknowledged three approaches imperative for developing 'reflective thinking'. These were "open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole heartedness". Practitioners that are "open-minded" are eager to receive others' opinions. Practitioners with this attitude are capable of accepting criticism and further developing practices. Practitioners with the reflective mind set tend to have a "responsible attitude" and enthusiastically engage in cognition regarding the holistic child. Dewey theorised that practitioners with this quality reflect on practice and aspects outside of current practices. Hallet (2013. p32) also states that the final aspect of 'reflective thinking' is whole heartedness. This attribute enables practitioners to be truly reflective. This quality enables practitioners to be reflective to the extent that it can develop change within practice and effect a wider scope within practice, provision and policy. Brock (2015) says that Dewey theorised that when reflecting it adds dimension to how people think.

Schon (2016) built of the work of Dewey and discovered a connection with reflection in the professional early years setting. Schon believes that by reflecting on practice, practitioners can expand prior knowledge and learn from reflection. Schon developed two forms of reflection: "reflection on action" and "reflection in action". The "reflection on reflection" is when reflection is undertaken after the event, where as "reflection in action" is when reflection is undertaken in the moment.

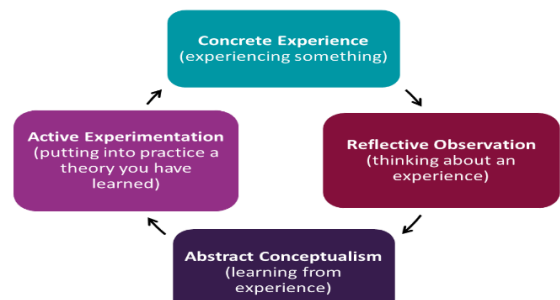
Brock (2015. P10) states that both Schon and Dewey envision reflection as a method of "problem solving". According to McMahon and Dyer (2018) the blend of both Dewey and Schon's work involves the practitioner to inspect what is done in practice.

Gibbs' model



(University of Hull, 2024)

Kolb's model



(University of Hull, 2024)

Analysis of models

There are many benefits to these models. Both models set a foundation to keep the practitioner focused on the task at hand and have a structured method of reflective practice. When reflecting it id beneficial to follow models as it is a useful place to start the process.

Although there are many benefits to these models there are also some draw backs. Although these models are well structured they can be restrictive if followed religiously and can also be very time consuming, it may not always be beneficial to start the point of reflective practice at the beginning of the models process.

Kolb's model is based on Dewey's theory of reflection, where as Gibbs model is built on Kolb's model furthering the depth of reflection as acknowledged by Johnson and Nahmad-Williams etal (2018. P470) .Gibbs model of reflection has easier language, whereas Kolb's model has more complex language. Gibbs model is easier to follow and appears to be an in depth process. How ever Kolb's model seems harder to follow as although there are less stages, these are not as in depth.

As stated on (UCD, no date) Gibbs theory of reflection was built on the basis of Kolb's theory. Gibbs theory of reflection consists of six stages. These six stages are "description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan". However Kolb's theory of experiential learning also stated in (UCD, no date) contains four stages of reflection. These are "concrete experience", "reflective observation", "abstract conceptualism" and "active experimentation".

Although Gibbs theory is more complex because it questions the process as stated by (UCD, no date). The university of Edinburgh (2022) states that Gibbs model is a beneficial way to reflect on experiences. The experience could be a reoccurring situation or a one-off experience.

Conclusion

In summary this briefing paper has discussed what reflective practice is and what the importance is. It has also discussed the theory behind reflective practice and how it has been built upon by other theorists (Dewey and Schon). There were two models of reflection selected to be analysed and theses were compared and contrasted, also discussing the pros and cons.

Written essay

This essay will discuss the importance of different characteristics of professional practice and the vitality of meeting the unique needs of children.

A professional practitioner can be defined in a variety of ways, and it appears there is no definitive definition. According to McGillivray (2008) the definition of professional practice and being a professional consists of intricate aspects such as old-style beliefs, thoughts, training, credentials and assessments. All of these aspects provide an apparent notion of “professional identity”. However, Perez (2019) suggests that “professionalism” is supported by standards that direct the information, skills, and moral values to perform at a professional level in a job role. It is vital to remember that early years practitioners, regardless of qualification status or experience, must have a central focus that the children’s needs and welfare of the children is paramount at all times, this is stated in the UNCRC article 3. Gasper (2015) states that the early years sector has a better perception of the worth and significance of skills that professional practitioners show in practice regardless of qualifications.

Professional practitioners should have a variety of values such as inclusivity, acting on integrity, teamwork, policies, knowledge, communication, meeting the needs of children in their care and supporting and nurturing children. Powell (2010) suggest that early years practitioners should possess values such as an honest interest in children’s development and children as a whole. It is vital to have effective communications with the children and their parents. Powell (2010) also states that practitioners should be professional and patient within the setting. It is imperative to be able to work within a team effectively. When working in the early years, practitioners need to be confident and have a helpful, kind and empathetic nature. Another value that should be instilled in professional practice is social inclusion and practitioners should show a willingness to undertake any training needed to ensure this. Values are highly significant within the early years setting. The general teaching council for Scotland (2021) states that values assist practitioners to grow their own professional individuality. As a practitioner these values enable them to support children to develop holistically through meeting

their needs. Having such values also instils in practitioners the understanding the importance of multi-agency work with the inclusion of families

Having effective communication with children is fundamental in the early years practice. City and guilds (2023) states that communication is a fundamental part of working within the early years sector. It is vital practitioners are able to communicate with a vast variety of people. When working with children it is important to gain good communication skills in order to have effective communications with the children, adults and other professionals. When communicating it could be verbal or non-verbal. Orey (2014) suggests that when communicating nonverbally the use of body language, pitch or eye contact would be effective. If the practitioners body language is open and the child is engaged in eye contact, then that child is more likely to communicate with that person.

It is vital that professional practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, this ensures that children are kept safe. According to Welsh government (2020) anyone who works with children in any capacity in Wales have safeguarding responsibilities for their charges. It is vital practitioners are aware of signs that a child may be at risk. Welsh government (2020) states that it is imperative for practitioners to share any concerns for children in their care, this single incident may be a part of a pattern that the practitioner is not aware of. The safeguarding policy describes in depth procedures that a practitioner should carry out if there is concern for a child. These procedures are intended to regulate all practice through out the whole of Wales and across multi-agencies. These protocols ensure practitioners use the legislation regarding the “social services and wellbeing (Wales) act 2014” and “statutory safeguarding guidance working together to safeguard people”.

According to Wilson (2016) there is an importance placed on supporting partnerships between practitioners, parents and outside agencies. This ensures the unique needs of the children are met. The department of education (2021) suggests that it is vital to develop relationships over a period of time. These relationships will then enable practitioners to effectively work together and support the children through the ongoing relationships. It is also vital that practitioners involve parents in their

children's learning. Welsh government (2023) suggests by practitioners having a good awareness of fundamental legislation and guidance that reinforces the policies in settings regarding children's wellbeing safety and welfare. This benefits from multiagency working in regards to the child protection process that can contain case conferences a producing written reports.

Observations and planning are highly beneficial in practice. According to the Welsh assembly Government (2008) it is vital for practitioners to have a good knowledge of child development and how to meet the needs of children. Through observation practitioners gain knowledge about each child within their care. The practitioner learns about the child's progress, how they get involved in activities, and what the children simply enjoy as an individual. This enables practitioners to plan more effectively to support the child's development, adapting to the unique needs of the child. When planning practitioners use knowledge they have gained through observation to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children. When practitioners provide continuous provisions, such as water play, role play area or a tuff tray activity. They are supplying a wide variety of play experiences for the children to explore. This ties into the UNCRC article 31 that all children have the right to take part and play with a high variety of activities. Through planning the practitioner can then enhance the provision by enhancing the materials given to the children. This would then extend the children's learning. This could be as simple as turning the home corner into a doctors or adding boats to the water play area. This would in turn meet the child's right to be heard (article 12). Through planning the practitioner is also able to plan focused sessions for the children. These sessions help children learn skills such as numeracy or linguistics. According to article 28 and 29 of UNCRC "every child has the right an education and to learn new skills". Welsh government (2015) states that within the early years framework "building a brighter future: early years and childcare plan" the vitality of having an effective way of monitoring and tracking children's progress and development is fundamental. This framework also discusses the importance of having consistency and statutory evaluation when the child enters full time school. This observation is vital for the practitioner to know what stage the child is at and in turn be able to meet the child's needs.

It is imperative that professional practitioners have a vast knowledge of children's needs and their rights. Under the United Nations all children have the same rights. According to UNICEF (2016) This consists of 54 articles consisting of 4 broad categories. These are "the right to life, the right to develop, the right to be protected and the right to participate". In regards to professional practice "the right to develop" is the most relevant as this would cover education, play and allow the children to have their own thoughts and beliefs. Some of the most relevant articles are to early years practitioners are article 3, 12, 28,29 and 31. The UNCRC article 3 suggests that the child's welfare should be of the highest importance. This is fundamental in practice. According to article 12 the child's views should be respected and taken seriously. It is vital that every child has a voice and feels heard. Article 28 states that every child is entitled to an education. It is fundamental that every child has an education and that they have the opportunities to learn and develop. Article 29 states that children have a right to have an education with goals. This article ties into article 28. Article 31 every child has the right to undertake activities as they wish. They have the right to play and relax. It is vital all children are given the same opportunities both within early years settings and at home.

In conclusion this essay has discussed what professional practice is and its importance. The essay has also discussed what values and the importance of these values in practice. The vitality of effective communication and relationships have been discussed. This essay has also discussed the importance of having an in-depth knowledge and understanding within early years . The vitality of multi-agency work has also been discussed. The importance of observation and planning and also the principles of the UNCRC have also been explored.

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