

FdA Mark Criteria for the Practice based Enquiry

Student name

Degree pathway:

Title of Study:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise published work and/or primary data;
2. Select, apply and justify an appropriate research method for in depth analysis of the chosen topic;
3. Critically analyse data collected and present a coherent and logical discussion of findings;
4. Demonstrate personal reflection and application to professional development;
5. Work within a framework of core values and ethicality.

Interpretation of Task, Scope of Materials, Processing Information and Experience, Professional Reflective Practice and Ethics, Presentation and Style

Key Elements	A grade	B grade	C Grade	D grade	E grade	F grade
1. Is their question well formulated, meaningful and purposeful? Will it enrich the students' knowledge and understanding, and will it be beneficial to the child/family and/or setting? LOs 1,3,6	Excellent understanding and insight into the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Able to articulately justify a purposeful area for critical examination which relates to their professional development. Clearly and persuasively articulate the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child.	A good understanding of the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Able to justify a purposeful area for critical examination which relates to their professional development. Clearly articulate the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child.	An adequate understanding of the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Able to identify a purposeful area for examination which relates to their professional development. Demonstrate awareness of the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child.	A limited understanding of the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Has attempted to identify a purposeful area for examination. Demonstrate some awareness of the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child.	Inadequate understanding of the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Has failed to identify a purposeful area for examination. Little or no awareness of the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child demonstrated.	Little or no understanding of the requirements of small scale practice-based enquiry Has failed to identify a purposeful area for examination. Little or no awareness of the potential for impact upon the student, setting and child demonstrated.
2. The theoretical framework. Has the student made clear the	The student has clearly demonstrated their own	The student has made a good attempt to	The student has attempted to	The student has made a limited attempt to	The student has failed to demonstrate their	The student has failed to demonstrate their

experience, understanding and beliefs that they bring to the research? LOs 1,2	position with relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature	demonstrate their position in relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature	demonstrate their position in relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature	demonstrate their position in relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature	position in relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature	position in relation to their own prior experiences, learning and existing literature
3. Ethicality. How were others consulted/ involved? How did the student ensure that it was a positive experience for the setting? Was confidentiality adhered to throughout? LOs 1,2	<p>Critically examines the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>Insightful awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting demonstrating reflection upon literature of ethicality.</p> <p>Sensitive Professional dialogue regarding ethical implications of the enquiry within the setting is evident.</p> <p>A consistent reflective ethical position is evidenced throughout, demonstrating core values as ethical practitioner.</p>	<p>Considers the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>Awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting demonstrating reflection upon literature of ethicality.</p> <p>Clear evidence of Professional dialogue with the setting.</p> <p>A sound knowledge of ethical aspects related to professional practice demonstrated.</p>	<p>Some consideration of the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>Some awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting demonstrating some reflection upon literature of ethicality.</p> <p>Some evidence of professional dialogue with the setting.</p> <p>Some knowledge of ethical aspects related to professional practice demonstrated.</p>	<p>Limited consideration of the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>Limited awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting demonstrating some reflection upon literature of ethicality.</p> <p>Limited evidence of professional dialogue with the setting.</p> <p>Limited knowledge of ethical aspects related to professional practice demonstrated.</p>	<p>A lack of consideration of the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>A lack of awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting.</p> <p>A lack of evidence of professional dialogue with the setting.</p> <p>A lack of knowledge of ethical aspects related to professional practice demonstrated.</p>	<p>No consideration of the relevance to and potential impact/ impact upon current practice.</p> <p>No awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture of the setting.</p> <p>No evidence of professional dialogue with the setting.</p> <p>No knowledge of ethical aspects related to professional practice demonstrated.</p>
4. A Literature Review. Has the student contextualised their research within current thinking on the topic, including the current policy context? Have they used a range of up to date texts, including	<p>Extensive range of relevant sources and beyond.</p> <p>Initiative demonstrated in accessing relevant materials.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>A full range of relevant sources.</p> <p>A thorough critical discussion, offering analysis, evaluation and some synthesis of different perspectives.</p>	<p>An appropriate range of relevant sources.</p> <p>Provides analysis and explanation at a descriptive level with some discussion of relevant issues. Some</p>	<p>A limited number and range of relevant sources.</p> <p>Material is predominantly reported. Uses information without</p>	<p>Limited number and range of sources.</p> <p>Material is predominantly reported. It is not explained or interpreted.</p>	<p>A very limited number and range of sources.</p> <p>Material is reported. It is not explained or interpreted.</p>

books and journal articles, and discussed them critically , in light of their own experience? Have they presented a viewpoint during this discussion and do not just 'listed' references? LOs 1, 3	Comprehensive and insightful exposition of relevant evidence. Makes innovative or original links with related theory/ practice/ research.	Effective application of theory to practice demonstrating some evidence of independent thinking.	evaluation in the choice of opinions presented. Some links made between theory and practice but require further examination/ development.	meaningful or relevant discussion. Limited links made between theory and practice but require further examination/ development.	No evidence of application of theory to practice.	No evidence of application of theory to practice.
5. Methodology. Have they given clear justification for the 'approach' that they chose to take to the research? Have they made clear whose voices they want to hear and why? Is this well-defended by literature? LOs 1,4	A developing understanding and knowledge of methodology, with some discussion of themes underpinned by relevant literature Sensitive consideration is made of research context and appropriateness of choice of methodological approach.	Able to distinguish between methodology and methods and articulate an approach with reference to literature Detailed consideration is made of research context and appropriateness of choice of methodological approach.	Able to distinguish between methodology and methods and articulate an approach Some consideration is made research context and implications for methodology.	A basic understanding and knowledge of methodology applied with some reference to relevant literature. Limited consideration is made of research context and implications for methodology.	A limited understanding and application of methodology with limited reference to literature. No consideration is made of research context and implications for methodology.	No understanding and application of methodology with limited reference to literature. No consideration is made of research context and implications for methodology.
6. Has the student justified the methods chosen to collect data, explaining why these were most appropriate for purpose by using appropriate literature?	Choice of appropriate methods and limitations discussed explicitly and competently in relation to literature and core values and ethicality and research question	Choice of appropriate methods and limitations discussed competently in relation to literature and/or core values and/or ethicality and/ or research question	Only choice of appropriate methods and no consideration of limitations discussed in relation to literature and/or core values or ethicality or research question	Choice of methods presented uncritically	Limited discussion of research methods/ inappropriate choice of research methods	Limited discussion of research methods/ inappropriate choice of research methods

<p>Have they used appropriate processes to collect the data?</p> <p>Have they discussed the permissions needed for those various methods?</p> <p>LOs 1,4,6</p>	<p>Excellent audit and discussion of all necessary research ethics protocols The process of accessing consent discussed and sensitively reflected upon</p> <p>Student succeeded in progressing participant consent to collaboration and co-construction</p>	<p>Full audit and discussion of all necessary research ethics protocols present The process of accessing consent discussed and reflected upon</p> <p>Student succeeded in progressing participant consent to collaboration</p>	<p>Audit of some necessary research ethics protocols implied and/or reported Process of consent for data collection reported with some evidence of reflection upon ethical elements</p> <p>Student attempted to progress participant consent to collaboration</p>	<p>Research protocols met but value of seeking consent assumed Process of consent for data collection described with limited reflection on ethical implications</p> <p>There was little or no attempt to progress participant consent to collaboration</p>	<p>Limited evidence of engagement with research ethics protocols Process of data collection described with limited reflection on ethical implications</p> <p>The student did not attempt to progress participant consent to collaboration</p>	<p>No evidence of engagement with research ethics protocols Process of data collection described with no reflection on ethical implications</p> <p>The student did not attempt to progress participant consent to collaboration</p>
<p>7. Data analysis Has the student looked at their data as a whole? Have they chosen appropriate examples to support their argument effectively? LOs 4,5</p> <p>Have they triangulated their results and recognised key themes?</p> <p>Explicit awareness and discussion of potential bias in data and choice of themes</p> <p>Confidentiality adhered to throughout</p>	<p>Results presented clearly and logically supported by strong and appropriate examples from primary data.</p> <p>Key themes clearly identified and discussed with systematic reference to the data</p> <p>Critical discussion of and reflection on potential bias in data and themes</p>	<p>Results presented clearly and logically supported by appropriate examples from primary data.</p> <p>Key themes identified with discussion and reference to the data</p> <p>Discussion of and reflection on potential bias in data and themes</p>	<p>Results presented logically supported by examples from primary data.</p> <p>Key themes identified with sound reference to the data</p> <p>Potential bias discussed with some reflection</p>	<p>Results presented but without a clear structure. Some examples of primary data chosen to support their argument but not always appropriate</p> <p>Unsystematic identification of themes from data and/or data presented method by method</p> <p>Limited acknowledgement of potential bias</p>	<p>Some results presented but without a clear structure. Few or no examples of primary data chosen to support their argument, if used then not always appropriate</p> <p>No clear themes identified/or data presented method by method</p> <p>Potential for bias not acknowledged</p>	<p>Some results presented but without a clear structure. Few or no examples of primary data chosen to support their argument, if used then not always appropriate</p> <p>No clear themes identified/or data presented method by method</p> <p>Bias evident without being acknowledged</p>
<p>8. Have they effectively compared their own findings to their findings from literature?</p>	<p>Critical and analytical discussion of their findings in relation to other recognised sources</p>	<p>Critical discussion of their findings in relation to other recognised sources</p>	<p>Consideration of their findings in relation to other sources</p>	<p>There is limited consideration of their findings in relation to other sources</p>	<p>There is little or no consideration of findings from other sources and</p>	<p>There is no consideration of findings from other sources and any</p>

Los 4,5	Critical interpretation of the findings and literature leading to Innovative and original links and insights.	Comparison of findings to the literature presented leads to insight and a demonstration of independent thinking and interpretation.	Links made are likely to require further examination and development.	Comparison supports proposal of a 'single right answer'	any evaluation is unsubstantiated Findings are presented with no comparison	evaluation is unsubstantiated The student presents their findings with no reference to literature
9. Has the student reflected upon the experience and the process of the enquiry? Have they made sound suggestions concerning what they would change if they were to carry out the enquiry again, which demonstrate development in their understanding of research? Los 1, 5,6	Student reflection on the process demonstrates thorough and critical evaluation of the research process informed by appropriate literature and personal values of professionalism, ethicality, inclusivity and personal development. Excellent transformation in understanding is evident. Recommendations are made for future improvement	Student reflection and evaluation is informed by appropriate literature and personal values of professionalism, ethicality, inclusivity and personal development. Good transformation in understanding is evident. Recommendations are made for future improvement	Student presents a sound evaluation of the experience and processes. There is some discussion at a descriptive level. Different perspectives are recognised and presented, and the student selects from research literature to justify the approach they took. Sound transformation in understanding is evident. Recommendations are made for future improvement	There is an adequate evaluation of the process by the student. Some expert opinion is included to inform a basic response. Limited transformation in understanding is evident. Limited recommendations are made for future improvement	The student reflection is inadequate. Their evaluation is characterised by repetition of the process indicating only a partial understanding of its strengths and areas for development. No evidence of transformation in understanding Few or no recommendations are made for future development/ change. They may not be appropriate or meaningful	The student reflection is inadequate. Their evaluation is characterised by repetition of the appropriateness of their chosen process. No evidence of transformation in understanding No recommendations or inappropriate are made for future development/ change.
10. Has the student critically examined what they have learned about	Critical reflection on learning which demonstrates:	Critical reflection on learning which demonstrates:	Critical reflection on learning which demonstrates:	Reflection on learning which demonstrates:	Limited evidence of reflection on learning:	No evidence of reflection on learning:

their topic and evaluated the relevance for their own and others' their (and others') future practice? LOs 1,5,6	critical analysis of significant learning and evaluation of relevance for their own and others' future practice including the wider context of Early Years.	critical analysis of significant learning and evaluation of relevance for their own and others' future practice	analysis of significant learning and consideration of relevance for their own and others' future practice	identification of learning and links made to their own and others' future practice	limited identification of learning or links made to their own and others' future practice	fails to identify learning or links made to their own and others' future practice
11. How has the student fed their findings back to the setting in a way that is sensitive and positive? LOs 1,5,6PI and E	Empathetic and sensitive collaboration demonstrated toward the context and culture of the setting Evidence of a valuable and beneficial contribution prepared for/ sensitively disseminated to the setting, where circumstances allow.	Evidence of sensitivity in collaboration with the setting. Evidence of a beneficial contribution prepared for/ coherently disseminated to the setting where circumstances allow.	A collaborative relationship demonstrated with the setting. Evidence of an appropriate contribution prepared for/ disseminated to the setting, where circumstances allow.	A clear attempt to work collaboratively with the setting Evidence of a contribution prepared for/ disseminated to the setting, where circumstances allow.	No evidence of working collaboratively with the setting. No evidence of any contribution prepared for/ disseminated to the setting.	Tone suggests that the setting was researched 'on' not with. No evidence of any contribution prepared for/ disseminated to the setting.

12. Is the narrative clear and well structured so that ideas are communicated clearly? Are the sources correctly referenced? LOs 1	Excellently structured in a style which is appropriate to the chosen topic/ theme.	Very well-structured in a style which is appropriate to the chosen topic/ theme.	Well-structured and using a style appropriate to the chosen topic/ theme.	The work is generally well structured and coherent.	The work lacks structure and clarity and does not communicate a clear knowledge of the topic.	The work lacks structure and clarity and does not communicate a clear knowledge of the topic.
	Highly critically reflective and creative, drawing on all possible perspectives. Referenced accurately throughout using Harvard Academic system	Clear critical reflection using a number of perspectives. Able to communicate clearly, and to present an argument underpinned by appropriate evidence. Mostly referenced accurately using Harvard Academic system	Clear reflection with some criticality, using more than a personal perspective. Coherent with language which reflects knowledge of the topic and interpretation of issues with some persuasive argument. Referencing is generally accurate and uses Harvard Academic system.	Reflection is limited. Information on the topic is generally descriptive based on a single viewpoint. Language used suggests a limited knowledge of the topic presented Referencing is generally accurate and uses Harvard Academic system.	Little or no evidence of reflection. Language used suggests a limited knowledge or misunderstanding of the topic presented Referencing lacks accuracy against Harvard Academic system.	No evidence of reflection. Language used is non-academic and suggests a limited knowledge or misunderstanding of the topic presented Referencing lacks accuracy against Harvard Academic system.

Summary points from marker

Signature: _____

A Small-scale Study

What are the Professional Development Needs of a Changing Early Years Workforce

Student no: 13010090

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Rationale

As a leader I was both excited yet daunted with the prospect of developing a small-scale enquiry. I wanted to make a difference, ultimately developing and improving current practice to benefit all stakeholders, however pinpointing my subject matter was not a simple process. Walker and Solvason (2014), stress the problematic stages of question formulation, this was certainly true in my case, but through personal reflection, collaborative team work and advice from my tutor my journey began to build momentum, reaching my current position. My reflective journal (appendice 7), has been key to this process and an invaluable tool to document my thoughts, breaking down this information, to result in a compact, researchable question, sparked by a 'niggle',

“...the moments that stand out from the general flow’ often create ‘niggles’, which, for the action researcher, spark their questions and their research to answer them” Mac Naughton, (2009). p.36.

The root of my research question evolved from a 'niggle', to personal motivation to narrow the gap in practioners knowledge of child development, having identified this as an area for improvement from a triangulation of sources; observation, supervisions and a recent Ofsted inspection. Lack of accessible training on this subject matter, drove me to develop my own program and it was when considering elements to this, I recognised the power of reflection from my own student journey, acknowledging that I should replace the concept of 'teaching' to creating supportive structures of reflective practice, learning together in a community of practice. (Wenger, 2000).

Continuous professional development promotes opportunities to develop practitioner skills, which positively impact the child's early years' experience. Supervision is recognised as a tool to facilitate professional development, Ofsted (Department for education, 2017) state, 'supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement'. I agree, although recognise the challenge

of meeting the needs of a team formed from individuals with different values, beliefs, cultural and social backgrounds. A chance conversation with my human resources manager acknowledged this, introducing me to the term 'Millennial employees', the new generation coming into the workforce. Hobbart and Sendek (2014), recognise this as a first, acknowledging we now have four generations within the workforce, and the workforce is changing. This resonated with me, to effectively mentor and support the professional development needs of the team I would need to recognise what their needs are, so my question was formed, 'What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?'

The purpose of this study is to examine and better understand how I can meet the professional development needs of my team, my journal (appendice 7), has allowed me to explore my thoughts and from this reflective process I have developed four key points of study, for my research to focus on.

1. How has the role of the Early Years workforce changed?
2. Do current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?
3. How do Early years practioners best engage in continuous professional development?
4. How can I as leader recognise and meet individual needs of the team?

Ethics

When considering my position as leader and the ethical considerations for this I came across the work of Bloor (2010) who considers the obligation of the researcher to 'bring about a good, not to irritate one's gatekeepers'. This resonated with me I needed to ensure the research was a positive experience, my participation information sheet (appendice 2), starts this process, using open and honest communication, which will reflect the ethos of my project. My reflective journal

(appendice 7), will allow me to record and review at regular intervals ensuring the practitioners well-being is prioritised.

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance and should be weaved throughout the entire process, this is more than a procedure, it is an ethos to last throughout the entire project (Humphreys and Dove 2000). My enquiry is based on collaborative working, researching alongside my participants, through open communication and seeking advice from my critical friend I can protect my participants from harm (BERA, 2011). Consulting with other ethical codes of practice (University of Worcester, 2017), I will ensure I remain sensitive to my environment acting with honesty and integrity throughout. Finally, regarding ethics I need to consider myself as the researcher, my reading of Callan and Reed (2011) acknowledged the importance of caring for oneself and to 'practice what you preach', this links to my other module where I recognised the vastness of my role as a leader and the accountabilities I have to families, community, society and my team, put this together with my personal responsibilities to my family I am spread quite thin. I need to nurture myself, regaining some of my energy to get the very best out of this experience as a researcher.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Finlay and Gough (2003) state, 'Reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers', social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process'. My reflective journal (appendix 7), identifies my position on current childcare qualifications as purely assumptions, Brookfield (2017), asks us to challenge those assumptions, engaging in theoretical perspectives to inform knowledge. This review consults a selection of key texts including theorists and government policy, justified for inclusion through the prioritising of literature, (appendix 11). To ensure my study's relevance, I will be basing research on England, excluding any literature before 2012, with the exception of the longitudinal study, The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project (2004), influential in many of my readings. Focusing on the four key questions identified in my rationale I aim to enrich my knowledge, gaining a better understanding of subject matter to evaluate the validity of my thoughts, exploring how I best meet the professional development needs of my team.

How Has the Role of the Early Years Workforce Changed?

My own experience of how I came to work in early years could be deemed controversial to this study in the fact that I was a parent helper, falling into a position with no qualification higher than a GCSE. I have remained in this role for the past 10 years, now leading the very same setting, having sought and driven my own 'training' through a variety of qualifications and an inquisitive nature. Over this period, we have evolved from a 'playgroup' to an 'early year's setting', from 'assistants' to 'educators', evolving skillsets as we fulfil our increasing legal obligations to include, interagency working, as stated in the, 'Working together to safeguard children', 2017 publication, (Department for Education, 2017).

Faulkner and Coates (2013) depict the historical perspective of the role of early years, illustrating how societal challenges impact government policy and educational reform, this incessant journey requires the early years workforce to adapt, upskill and adopt new skills. I experience this daily, my current challenge, increasing capacity for more two-year spaces, alongside 30hrs funding and external obligations to meet the imminent GDPR (General data protection requirements, 2018). Morris (2017), spokesperson for the campaign group, 'champagne nurseries for lemonade funding, states, 'one of the biggest problems is the constant manipulation of our remit by successive governments, the media and the perception of what we do'. Similarly, the professional association for childcare and early years (PACEY 2016), recognised practitioners under strain, uncertainty in the sector threatening the early years workforce and the ability to meet current policy requirements, however I argue early years is not just about policy compliance.

Rose and Rogers (2012) acknowledge the complex and multi-dimensional role of the early years practitioner, introducing the concept of the 'plural practitioner', describing the practitioner as, formed of 'seven selves'; critical reflector, carer, communicator, facilitator, observer, assessor and creator. Embedded in a complexity of relationships, this role is now deeper than 'knowledge', it insists on an 'emotional cost', considering the practitioner themselves and what they bring. (Taggart, 2015).

Do current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?

The EPPE project (Sylva et al, 2004) was pivotal research, acknowledging the link between qualification and quality, empowering the sector to stand up and be counted amongst teachers, however data revealed a lack of child development knowledge and pedagogy, recommending improvements to content of initial qualifications and subsequent training. In 2012, the government ordered a review of early education and childcare qualifications in England, (Nutbrown Report) Department for Education, (DfE, 2012), unveiling inconsistencies and confusion across early years training and student experiences, 56% of participants stating the range of qualifications did not meet the needs of the current workforce. Five years on, The

Early Years Workforce Strategy, (DfE, 2017), expose similar findings, stressing the critical state of the early years workforce, inconsistent training, sporadic external support across local authorities, lack of professional identity and unclear progression routes, threatening the future quality of early years education and care.

Literature portrays a bleak picture for the early years workforce, the vision for early years staff to have a strong professional identity, take pride in their work and be recognised and valued by society as a whole, (DfE, 2012, Nutbrown Report), seems a slow process. Suggestions that higher qualifications mean better quality have been received with scepticism, quality as discovered in my last year's work is difficult to define and measure, different perspectives influencing our position. I feel perplexed that an early year's teacher can lead a setting on a 1:13 ratio, challenging that even the highest qualification does not support you with the day to day logistical needs of caring for children.

It is here my position evolves from advocating for better initial training to the realisation that entry qualification is insignificant, proposing skills learned should be contextual to the workplace, engagement in experiential learning where, 'on-going learning from reflection, is targeted and specific to practice' (PACEY, 2016). I also argue that practitioner competence should not be determined by a 'level', knowledge is important however interpersonal skills and attitude should not be overlooked. (Georgeson and Campbell-Barr 2014).

How do Early Years Practitioner's best engage in Continuous Professional Development?

Oberhuemer (2013) recognises the need for sustained professional development however argues there is little reform to effectively understand how this presents in the workplace. Taggart (2015) proposes experiential training focusing on the 'professional self', recognising that 'professional identity' can be contrasting, linking to the work of Rose and Rogers (2012), and the 'plural practitioner'. Georgeson and Campbell-Barr (2014), advocate the importance of practical wisdom and dispositional understanding, stating;

‘Early years work requires both stability within self, promoted by an awareness of one’s own disposition and personal epistemology, and the capacity to respond flexibly to the changing needs/wishes/emotions of others’. p.11.

Thought provoking readings have brought me to a position where I recognise continuous professional development (CPD), as a personal journey, driven by self-awareness and reflection, my own journey in module 2503, a powerful example, facilitating both professional and personal growth. There is however an emotional cost to this, an ‘emotional labour’ acknowledged by Taggart (2015), warning of practitioner ‘burn out’ from working in such an emotive profession, recommending mindfulness as a technique to alleviate pressure and support attunement needed to fulfil the role.

It is overwhelmingly transparent from my reading, that CPD is a vital component to the sustainability of the early years workforce, yet as identified in, ‘The study of early education and development, (DfE, 2017), how this presents in practice fluctuates greatly, frequency of CPD ranging from 1 to 24 times a year. PACEY (2016), identifies possible barriers to this as lack of time, money and support, I would like to add another element to this, the ‘emotional investment’, we must make to ensure the professional development of our workforce.

‘If we want our children to have the best experience in their earliest and most formative years, we must invest in and value those who are shaping their early development’ DfE (2017) The Early Years Workforce strategy. p5

How can I as a leader recognise and meet the needs of the team?

Leadership is a relational activity, requiring adaptability to nurture and recognise the changing needs of individuals, facilitated through observation, collaborative working and supervision. Rose and Rogers (2012), suggest practical actions are informed by our decision making, ‘ultimately driven by our personal system of beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes’. p18. Bronfenbrenner’s work conceptualised four ecological

systems that an individual interacted with, which help form and scaffold values and beliefs, however we must also consider the 'generation' in which they were born, 'collective experiences of members of a group within a designated span of birth years (generation) shape value sets and attitudes'. (Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause, 2017) p104.

In my rationale I recognised the generational diversity of my team, consisting of; Baby boomers, Generation X and Millennials with Generation Z due to enter the workforce in 2020. Differing values can be a challenge in the workplace, creating lack of relatability and resentment, however if facilitated effectively can offer unique perspectives and complimentary skills;

'Employers must understand the values of each generation and focus on building effective communication patterns among employees of all ages to ensure mutual understanding, respect and effective intergenerational communication. (Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause, 2017) p109.

Generational diversity also has a wider reaching impact, I consider how I utilise individual strengths, matching key persons to families in terms of relatability and the needs of the family. Within the team, millennials share their aptitude with technology, whilst baby boomers teach us about nature and patience with practical skills. With careful consideration of leadership skills, the benefits of a diverse team can be positive for all stakeholders, allowing both personal and professional growth.

I now conclude my literature review, which has instigated much thought and reflection. My research will now endeavour to explore if generational diversity within my setting does bring with it different values, attitudes and motivators. I would also like to consider the perception of the early years role within my team. By keeping my team at the heart, I can give meaning and purpose to my enquiry to improve quality practice. (Walker and Solvason 2014).

Chapter 3

Methodology

When researching the methodological approaches for my research I felt overwhelmed with the complexity and the obscurity of the language used, feeling alienated and disconcerted I waded through various literature to attempt to unravel this new academic world I found myself in, but to no avail. Deciding to begin this process again, I came across some empowering writing, acknowledging my predicament, (Callan and Reed, 2011 p.39-42), suggesting, confusing terminology places research at risk of being inaccessible to those best placed to make a difference. This was powerful, I realised I did belong, action research (Mc Niff and Whitehead, 2002) is what I engage with daily, an organic cyclical process, born from reflective practice with the objective to make a positive difference. It was at this point I decided to take control, methodically working through literature, I shaped my approach to form my own research paradigm, with my values at the heart.

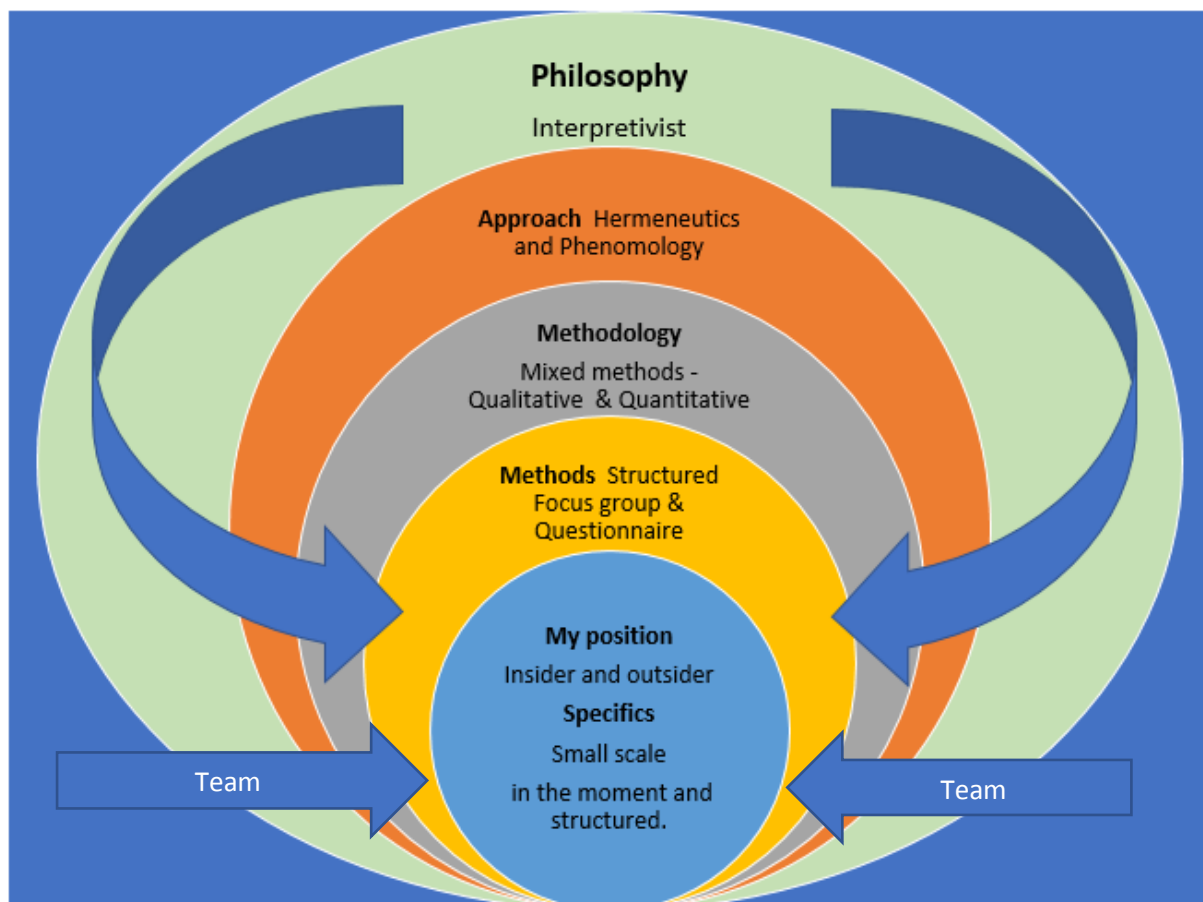


Figure 1 My Research Process

My research places my team at the core, I wanted to gain a true insight into perceptions of professional development whilst considering the needs of the workforce, this was research personal to my setting, a small-scale enquiry aimed to capture experiences, giving a voice to my participants. Taking an interpretivist philosophy (Denscombe, 2010), I could empower my team and give them the opportunity to steer this process, as part of my commitment to them as leader of this community of practice, (Wenger, 2000).

To ensure my research is credible, I must consider my dual role within the setting as both insider and outsider. Wadsworth (2011) identifies both positives and negatives to each role, stating, 'outsider and insider positions are not intrinsic to people but rather are a function of the context in which one is placed'. Denscombe (2010), suggests interpretivists must always be 'insiders' 'part and parcel of the social reality', acknowledging that researchers thinking may be shaped by personal experiences. The purpose of this research was to challenge my assumptions, so it was vital I considered deeply how I could gain participant experience, without coercing my own view points and driving my own agenda. Taking a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I could discover the essence of human experience by suspending my common-sense beliefs (Denscombe, 2010), this fluid and flexible approach would allow the research to develop naturally.

As a first-time academic researcher, I recognised that I was entering a cyclical process, my question had evolved through reflection and I predicted that the design of my research may also evolve. My original thoughts of following an action research approach were thwarted as I realised I was not seeking a solution to a problem, I was seeking knowledge. Consideration of appreciative enquiry was short-lived as this did not fit with my commitment to an interpretivist philosophy, I would be assuming what was 'good' practice. Returning to my motivation to drive research through my team I came across a journal (Denscombe, 2008), exploring how communities of practice are consistent with the pragmatist underpinnings of the mixed methods approach. Mixed methods as a research paradigm would allow me to research broadly through qualitative tools, then prove or disprove through quantitative data, positioning this with my literature review, my research design would be strengthened through triangulation, providing a robust framework from which to begin my research (Walker and Solvason, 2014).

Qualitative Methods

After consulting with my tutor, I chose a focus group as my qualitative data tool, this would explore participants views, and the reasoning behind this, giving a deeper understanding of the groups experience. Denscombe (2010), states the success of focus groups depends on establishing a climate of trust where participants can express themselves freely, on consideration of this I invited my management team to engage in this stage of the research, as a group who are familiar with collectively acquiring shared knowledge through participation in professional discussions. As 'insider' to the research I needed to consider my impact on data collection, deciding to step aside as moderator and delegating to my human resources manager, I could then transcribe the audio recorded discussion, reassured I had taken precautions to limit my influence on data.

Content with this decision I then considered the logistics of the focus group, considering the 'bureaucratic burden', of research (BERA, 2011 p.7:21) I decided to run the group off site and during the working day, allowing sufficient time to allow the research to develop at a natural pace. Wanting to engage with the emotional aspect of practitioner experience I planned my questions to instigate reflection on their own experiences planning questions that would gradually develop the conversation (appendice 5).

Ethics were revisited when a workplace situation left team morale low, my decision to reschedule the focus group gave the opportunity to ensure participants understood and acknowledged their right not to participate and the procedure to withdraw from the project at any time, demonstrating sensitivity and respect to all participants. My ethical proposal form (appendice 1), considers in more depth the ethical challenges that may present in this study.

Quantitative Methods

Taking the main themes from the focus group and revisiting my literature review I identified key aspects warranting further exploration, quantitative data would allow me to complete the picture, proving or disproving new knowledge. Designing my self-completion questionnaire, I considered the 'response burden' (Denscombe, 2010), to ensure a good response rate I needed to ensure the questions were concise,

relevant and unambiguous. Ethically I needed to ensure anonymity, and this challenged my thinking to how best ensure this as an 'insider' to the research, I therefore chose specific statements which participants could rank by a tick in a box. This was recognised as a positive way forward when piloting the questionnaire with my critical friend, predicting data could be analysed effectively and anonymously. Offering the opportunity to participate to the whole team, a participant information sheet was issued alongside consent forms (appendice 2, 3 and 8), explaining the reasoning for the research, outlining my ethical duties to them.

Designing a research paradigm is a complex matter, I have had to delve deep into myself to commit to a process that has not come easy to me, however challenges can result in new learnings. This journey has prompted me to consider how I make sense of and order new knowledge, completing a visual representation of my thoughts (appendice 12), allowed me to contextualise and identify patterns to my thinking.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Findings

Data collection

My data collection was completed in two parts, the first part a focus group exploring my original research question, 'What are the professional development needs of the Early years workforce?'. Capturing real life experience from the spoken word, this qualitative data was then transcribed in its entirety (appendice 9) ensuring I was true to the participants, limiting bias in my interpretations. My commitment was to remain faithful to my participants contribution, keeping authenticity, and although the process was time costly, it allowed me to fully immerse into the data (Walker and Solvason 2014). Cohen et al, (2007), recognises the problematic task of data reduction, this was true of all my readings, Denscombe (2010), suggesting computer software as an accurate means to truly interpret qualitative data. Time and financial constraints did not permit me to proceed this way, alternatively I summarised the transcription, picking out key themes and patterns, across all questions, justified in a summary (appendice 13). Further reading on data analysis acknowledged this method may be seen as a limitation to the research, so I compiled a data reduction grid to visually present links in my research thus far (appendice 14). I recognise that this method could be arguably unintentionally bias through my 'insider' role, however by acknowledging my 'researcher self' (Denscombe, 2010) and detaching myself through my hermeneutic approach, I hope to validate this decision.

The focus group as shown below in figure 2, consisted of two female deputy managers and a female human resources manager who has progressed from practitioner to her current role. Although a relatively small representative of views, I was confident that the participants would be comfortable in this grouping and could speak freely in a respectful environment.

Participant (identified through coloured text in appendices 9 &14)	Age on entry into workforce	Years in Early Years	Entry qualification	Current position
Green	19	25	NNEB	Deputy manager After school club manager
Blue	19	26	NNEB	Deputy manager SENCO
Purple	27	17	Cache level 2 in workplace	Human resources Manager Bookkeeper.

Figure 2 – Focus group participants

Presentation of findings: The focus group

There were some powerful reflections on influential people throughout the participants career path with passionate recounts of how these positive relationships have enhanced both their professional and personal development, including leadership which interestingly was an additional element to the discussion the participants introduced as an important aspect to consider.

‘She supported me fully, she understood that I was newly qualified, she understood that I didn’t know everything, and she understood that the things I had learned I had possibly learnt from them, so if it wasn’t quite right she helped me through it. I remember her to this day’

Alternatively, participants had experienced negative experiences from poor leadership, impacting confidence, ‘It was awful, especially when you go from a very good leader to then suddenly having a very bad leader, because you know how it could be’, this was identified as having a wider impact, ‘you have a lot of self-doubt and then you don’t want to come to work so then when you are at work your then miserable and the children pick up on it’.

When considering the participants training route into the early years workforce the NNEB qualification received high accolade, supporting students to gain practical skills through practice-based learning, classroom theory and accessibility to a wide range of placements, highlighting the potential career paths available. In comparison the work-based Cache qualification although not 'preparing' for the workforce made sense of the practitioner role, 'I was very naïve, so for me the training was invaluable'.

Continuous professional development and 'opportunities' had supported all participants in their career, recognising as we respond to different challenges the learning never stops, 'Everything you do in childcare is a step up a ladder and a learning curve...whatever you do you find there's something you can learn from'. Progression was deemed a key driver for practitioners, 'It was exciting, and I suppose because I progressed with them, I didn't get stuck in a rut'. In addition to the support of the workplace it was recognised how family support impacts practitioners through upbringing, instilling values and beliefs, support in early career choices and the perception of the role. 'I do think our home life effects our working life and it does make a difference on how we portray ourselves in our working environment'. Perception, threaded through the discussion with language depicting a lack of professional identity in society, 'I was a bog-standard nursery nurse', 'parents just think you play'.

When discussing the current needs of the workforce, societal attitudes and generational diversity was acknowledged as a challenge, demonstrating a good awareness of the workforce as individuals with differing personal and professional needs, this was also agreed as a positive aspect, 'We are very lucky in that we work with a team of people who have a wide variety of experiences'. The group were confident they met the needs of the workforce without being complacent, adaptability seen as a contributing factor to meeting these needs, 'we meet the needs, but we are prepared that there is always more that we can do'. As the discussion drew to an end the conversation returned to the importance of strong leadership, 'it does all filter down, it goes from the leader, to our level of management, then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again, so the staff pick up on that, morale gets better and then you get the best out of them. They want to give more, they want to train more, so it's all of it really isn't it'.

Presentation of Findings: The Questionnaire

9 colleagues (8 female, 1 male), were invited to partake in the questionnaire and I received 9 completed responses. Disappointingly although the questionnaire had been piloted with my critical friend a minority of participants had incorrectly completed the ranking questions, as the participants had elected to be contacted again, I sensitively revisited this element with them to ensure all responses could be used. Response choices also included 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', however for the purposes of data presentation I have only presented responses given.

Qualification on entry	Number of participants	My training supported me for the role I was employed to do	
		Strongly agree	Agree
NNEB	3	2	1
NVQ	3	1	2
Cache	3	2	1

Figure 3 – Questionnaire participant sample

Figure 3 presents the breakdown of participants and the training route they took when first coming into the early years workforce. This data is a good indicator of how training courses have changed over the years, providing me access to a mixture of participant experiences.

Professional Development

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree
I value regular in-house and external training	55%	45%	
I am aware of the progression routes available to further my studies in early childhood education and care	55%	45%	
I am aware of different career paths in the early years sector	33%	67%	
I would like to specialise in a specific area of childhood, education and care		22%	78%

Figure 4 – Questionnaire - Professional development

The table above illustrates practitioner opinion on the subject of professional development and awareness of opportunities within the early years sector, these elements were included in the study to prove or disprove literature on the critical state of the early years workforce as suggested in the Early Years Workforce Strategy, (DfE, 2017).

Perception of the role of the Early Years practitioner

Following the literature review and focus group I wanted to explore further the perceptions people hold of the early years practitioner and that of the practitioner themselves, the data displayed below represents the view of the practitioner.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Society values the contribution of early years practitioners to children's educational development	11%	56%	11%	22%
Parents and guardians values the contribution of early years practitioners to children's educational development	33%	56%	11%	
I am proud to tell people what I do for my occupation	100%			
My family supports me in my role	78%	22%		
I make a positive difference to children and families in my care	56%	44%		

Figure 5 – Questionnaire – Perception of the role

Qualities of the Early Years Practitioner

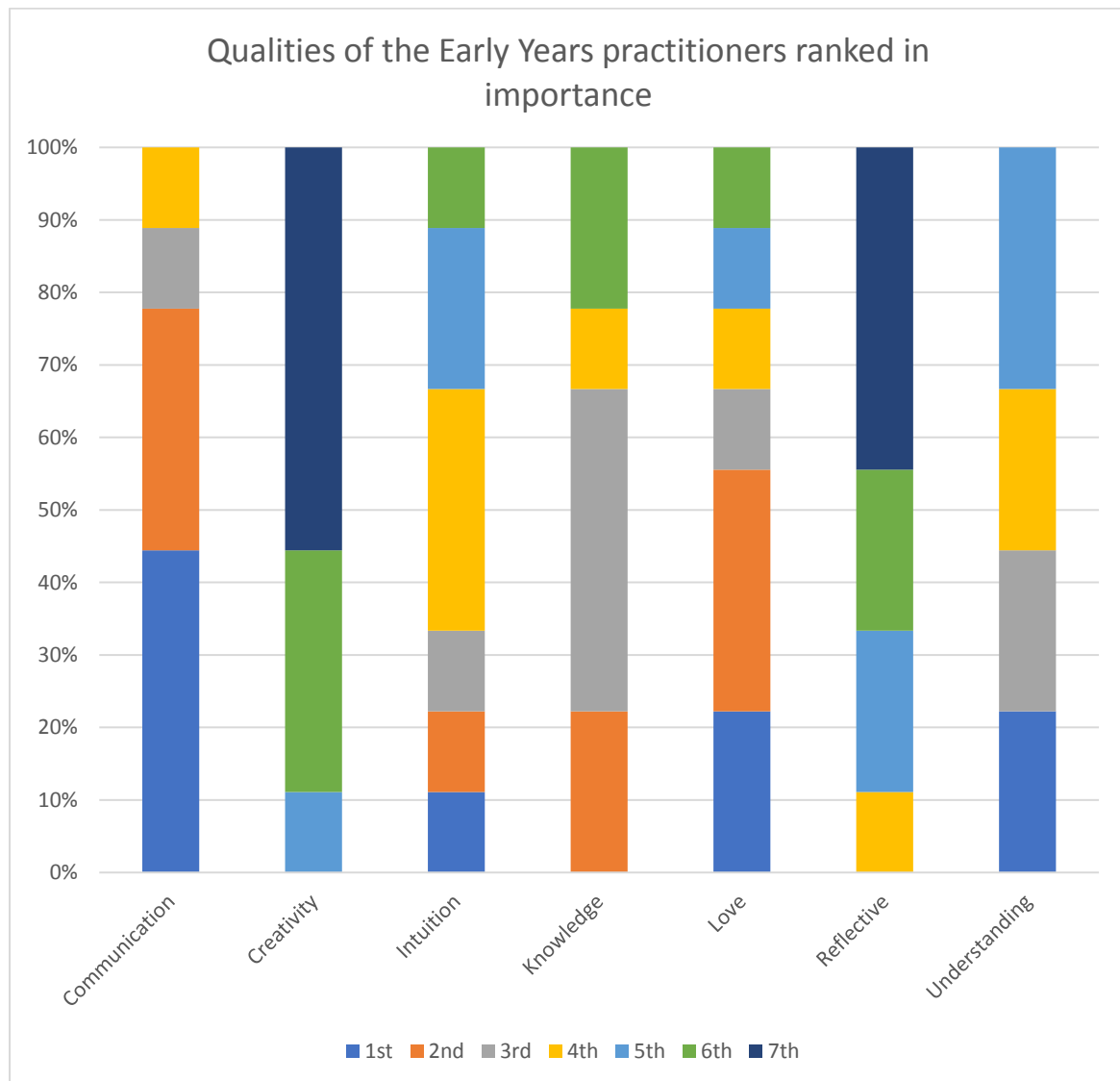


Figure 6 – Questionnaire - Qualities of the early years practitioner

Figure 6 illustrates practitioner views on the qualities needed to perform the practitioner role, I was curious to explore some of the elements of the plural practitioner suggested by Rose and Rogers (2012), in addition I added 'love' after my previous years assignment highlighted the confusion often associated with, 'professional love' (Dr Jools Page, 2016). Intuition, was also added as a quality that enables us to offer emotional and physical security as the secondary caregiver, relating to the work of John Bowlby (1969).

Motivators of the Early Years Practitioner

I wanted to explore if values and motivators were different for individuals within my setting. Disappointingly when designing the questionnaire, I failed to capture the generation of the participants, leaving me unable to compare and contrast the generational differences. As an insider to the research I am aware of the ages of all my participants however on consideration of ethics I concluded to use this knowledge would be interfering with the process of the study and I had to except this was an error on my part.

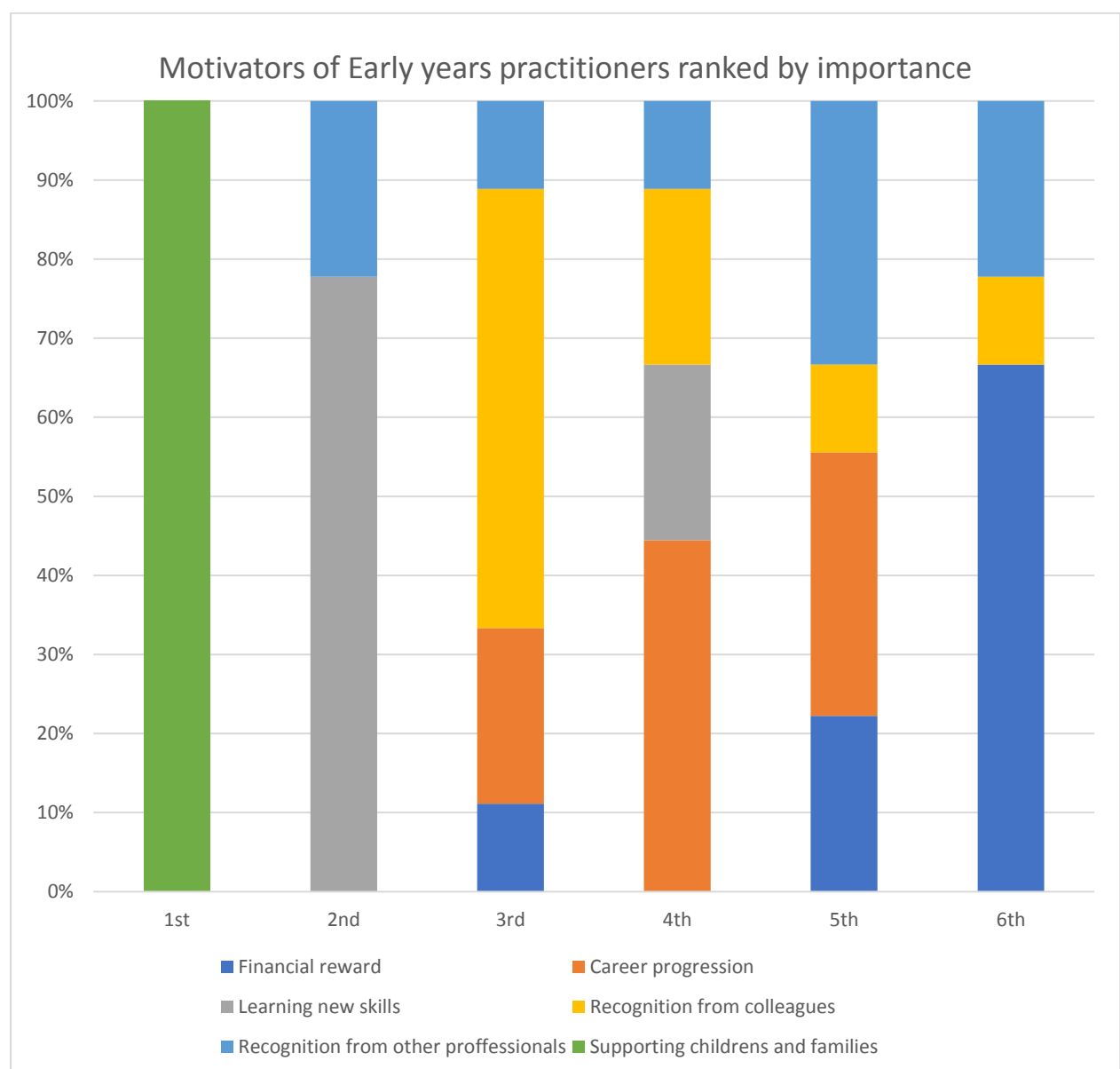


Figure 7 – Questionnaire – Motivators of the early years practitioner

Chapter 5

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Qualification and Continuous Professional Development

This study was prompted by my assumption that current childcare qualifications on entry into the workplace were not fit for purpose, evidence from a range of literature confirms this, identifying a lack of child development knowledge, pedagogy and inconsistent training as key factors, contributing to the critical state of the early years workforce. I was therefore surprised to unveil contrasting evidence from my data, with 100% of participants acknowledging their training prepared them for the role they were employed to do, despite different training routes into the workforce. Similarly, participants demonstrated an understanding of progression routes available to them, challenging the findings from my literature. Earnest recounts of the practical and placement experiences available through the NNEB route, acknowledged exposure to many career choices, however what can be clearly seen in figure 4, is the 78% non-committal response to specialising in early years, which leads me to question the depth of participants knowledge, regarding opportunities within the sector.

Continuous professional development (CPD), was a priority from all data sources, 78% of participants identifying, learning of new skills as a key motivator, second to supporting children and families. Discussion acknowledged how supportive environments foster the perpetual process of learning through experience, literature prioritising CPD as a workforce investment we must make to impact positively, early child development, yet acknowledging the inconsistencies of delivery across the sector. Taggart (2015), identifies the 'emotional cost', this role demands, suggesting CPD is driven best through developing self-awareness and reflective practice. Data interpretation however contradicts this with 44% of participants ranking 'reflection' as the least important quality of an early year's practitioner, with the remaining 56% positioning this in the lower brackets. This suggests that although CPD is regarded highly there is a distinct lack of acknowledgement for the role reflection plays in both personal and professional development.

Perception and the Changing Role of the Early Years Practitioner

Contrary to expectations the changing role of the early years workforce was not identified as an influencing factor during the focus group discussion, this surprising omission could be attributed to either an acceptance of the broadening roles demanded of an early year's practitioner or a limitation of the qualitative research process. In contrast literature clearly depicted a cycle of societal challenges, informing government policy, filtering down responsibilities to the workforce thus requiring adaptability and upskilling to fulfil these duties. Adaptability was recognised, as a contributing factor to meeting the needs of the workforce as identified in the focus group discussion, additionally communication was given priority, 'communication, that is key to everything, because if you don't talk to people you don't know what's missing, what's needed' this was also indicated as a key quality of an early years practitioner, with 78% positioning this as first or second in rank of importance. In response to other qualities of an early year's practitioner it was evident that love and intuition produced a variability of responses, this suggests a confusion over the role of professional love and practitioner confidence in attunement to their own practical wisdom (Georgeson and Campbell-Barr 2014).

Professional identity as identified in literature is a challenge to the early years workforce, with perceptions of the practitioner role struggling to keep up with the ever-changing magnitude of responsibilities in our remit. Language used within the focus group depicted humility in regard to practitioner contribution to early years, 'I was a bog-standard nursery nurse', illustrating this long-held view is still instilled in the current workforce. In response to the statement, 'society values the contribution of early years practitioners to children's educational development', (figure 5), 22% of participants disagreed with 11% not committing to a definite answer, despite this 100% of participants were proud to tell people what they did for an occupation, believing they make a positive difference to children and families in their care. This overwhelming response, suggesting societal attitudes although a challenge to the sector, does not detract from the commitment and passion felt by those in the profession. One unanticipated theme introduced by the focus group was the practitioner supportive network at home, recognising family as influential in early career choices and in nurturing values and beliefs, 100% of participants acknowledging they felt supported in their role by their family.

The Role of Leadership

The Early years workforce strategy, (DfE 2017), insists we must invest in our workforce to give our children the very best experiences in their most formative years. The focus group discussion exemplified this through open and honest reflection of experiences, illustrating how 'investment' can come from not only workplace opportunities, but strong leadership, offering understanding, and a belief of one's ability. Understanding of individuals within the team structure was explored in depth during the focus group, demonstrating a holistic view of the practitioner, consideration given to not only the needs of the individual but where these may stem from, including generational differences. Interestingly the consensus of the group was that working in such a diverse team brought positive experiences, learning from each other to strengthen the workforce, linking to the writing of Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause (2017), who value the unique perspectives and complimentary skills that come from mixed generation teams, when facilitated effectively.

It is evident from both literature and the focus group that strong leadership is key to the development of the current workforce, nurturing and respectful relationships providing insight into the varying needs and motivators of the team. An unfortunate oversight when designing the questionnaire left me unable to compare and contrast generational differences in terms of motivators, I was therefore surprised when data revealed, 'supporting children and families', was the number one motivator for 100% of participants. Positioning this with 'financial reward', being ranked as least important by 67% of participants, indicates the underlying emotional connection felt by practitioners, suggesting early years is more than a job, it's a vocation. Finally, the relational aspects of leadership were proved to impact practitioners both positively and negatively, with potential to influence the wider team in both professional and personal development, 'it does all filter down, it goes from the leader, to our level of management, then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again'. The focus group concluded that needs of the workforce were met through collaborative working, adaptability and a belief that we can always do better, 'we meet the needs, but we are prepared that there is always more that we can do'.

Chapter 5

Reflection on Process of Enquiry

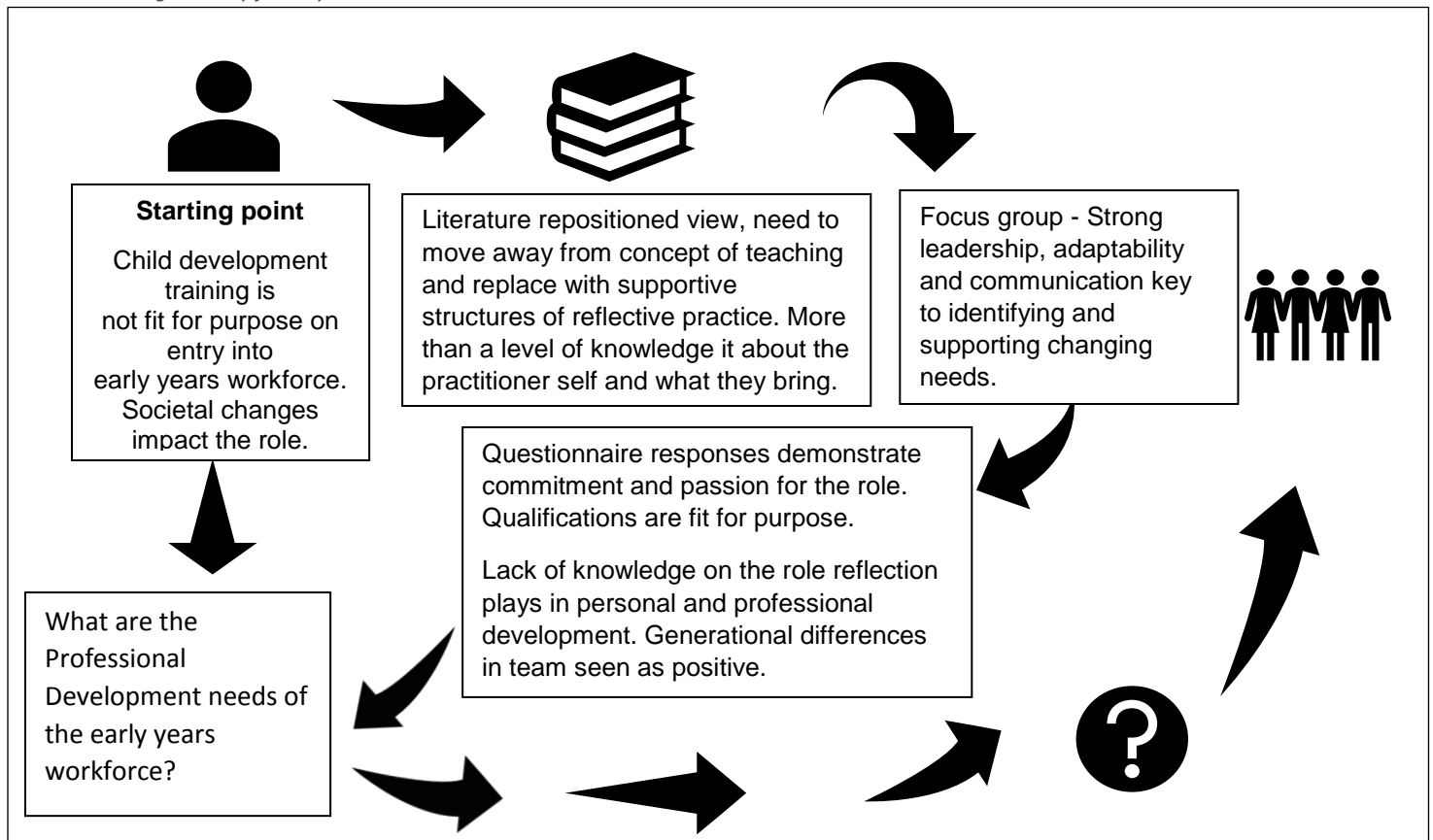
My Journey

When reflecting on my experience as a first-time academic researcher, I can best describe it as embarking on a journey with an unknown destination, evoking a range of emotions from anticipation and exhilaration to feelings of frustration and despondency. My reflective journal (appendice 7), provided a safe place in which to position my thoughts, as I explored how best to frame my interest of study into a workable question, thereby documenting the fluctuating momentum of my thinking. This irregular pattern of thought, although frustrating in the moment I now recognise as an essential part of the process, both the, 'deep, slow contemplation' and the more 'surface organisational thinking' (Jarvis et al, 2014), facilitating an environment for the 'consecutive ordering' of ideas, each thought, determining the next, (Dewey, 1910).

My position as insider to the research presented challenges as warned by Anderson and Shattuck (2012) who acknowledge the need to walk a narrow path between 'objectivity and bias', this did require a disciplined approach, more so at the data reduction stage where I had inadvertently added words to my summary not spoken at the frequency implied, it was on recognising this that I realised the care and attention needed to truly adopt a hermeneutic phenomenological approach and truly suspend my beliefs, however this proved difficult. On transcribing the focus group discussion, and repeatedly listening to this verbatim I noted a subtle undertone, resulting in self-doubt of my abilities as a leader, it took strength to withdraw from these feelings, positioning myself as an outsider to protect myself as a researcher. Despite this, insider knowledge enhanced my study, giving relevance to the research, contextual to the setting. I was able to protect my participants by excluding data that could identify them, monitoring their levels of involvement to ensure I met my ethical duties, whilst gaining a better understanding of the management team dynamic. I have learned to stand back and trust, empowering the team to share dilemmas as a collective enterprise (Brookfield, 2017), using social participation to bring about good (Bloor, 2010), suggesting that, 'this inside knowledge adds as much as it detracts from the research validity.' Anderson and Shattuck, (2012).

As with any journey, there are moments of self-doubt regarding the route one should take, consideration of time and priorities instrumental to the planning, courage sometimes needed to divert from the original course, care needed to not get distracted along the way. My journey was not straightforward, with unplanned stops delaying anticipated progress. I began the process assuming child development training on entry into the workforce was unfit for purpose, the review of literature acknowledging a need for supportive structures of reflective practice to best foster continuous professional development. The mixed methods approach gained insight through the practitioner lens (Brookfield, 2017), with unexpected results, finding myself lost in my thoughts as to which direction to take. I still find myself in this state of flux, (Mc Niff and Whitehead ,2002), with no true answer to my original research question, however through taking the 'scenic' route I have built up layers of knowledge and understanding. I now take this to the next stage of my journey where through strong leadership, communication and adaptability I hope to harness the reflective culture needed to support practitioners both professionally and personally and ultimately meet their needs.

Figure 8 My journey



Chapter 6

Dissemination of findings

Working in early years, requires a level of commitment for reflection and 'in the moment' research, continually evaluating processes and structures to ensure we provide the very best start for the children and families in our care. This small-scale study took this to a deeper more meaningful level, exploring below the surface, triangulating data (Walker and Solvason, 2014), to inform practice, add value and ultimately improve quality. At the start of the process the team were placed at the heart of the enquiry and every effort has been made to ensure their involvement as a community of practice (Wenger, 2000), has been acknowledged throughout the entirety of the project. Participants have embraced this opportunity, 100% respondents acknowledging the research was carried out ethically, adding credibility to the findings.

Limitations to the study can be learned from, some initial communication barriers on design of the questionnaire, alongside the omission of exploratory questions in regard to the generational age of the participants an oversight, yet despite this valuable content was unveiled. One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study was the lack of acknowledgement for the role reflection plays in terms of professional development, I recognised this as a further area for study, aligning this with my workplace focus to improve the mentoring system, these complementary facets have potential to drive forward change. Revisiting literature, (DfE, 2012), helped clarify thoughts, my reflections on the Nutbrown Report (appendice 11), prompting me to explore the possibility of developing a practitioner portfolio. Goodfellow (2010), states professional portfolio development can be enriching and empowering, providing a vehicle for reflection, documenting the 'practitioner self' to support self-awareness and reflection, developing practice and acknowledging purposefulness to one's work, all aspects explored within this enquiry.

As researcher I have a responsibility to feed-back my findings, ensuring the momentum of learning continues, making a difference to others and becoming an 'agent of change' (Hanson and Appleby, 2014). After consultation with my

management team, and committee I have been given approval to develop the practitioner portfolio, with an understanding of the time investment required. In terms of the wider team as this project is regarding personal and professional development unique to the individual, I plan to speak to each practitioner individually. As an insider to the research and with a better understanding of the individual needs, I believe this to be the best approach where I can ensure I remain ethical and participants are supported to understand better how we can collectively act on findings (Callan and Reed, 2011).

My role as research facilitator has provided opportunity to stand back and listen, findings although unique to a small sample of practitioners have provided a basis on which to make a change, whether this could be useful in a wider context is difficult to determine, however by empowering the team and valuing their contribution I hope to demonstrate what can be achieved as a community of practice. (Wenger, 2000). Challenges have presented throughout the process of enquiry, none more so than when reflecting on the dissemination of findings, I was conscious I had no immediate answer or solution to my question, no conclusion, Walker and Solvason (2014), reassure that research is like a spiral, on comparing new knowledge to previous thoughts, you can continue on a slightly different path, it I here I realised my journey was not finished it was time to take another road trip.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Recommendations

Hanson and Appleby (2014), define reflective activism as there being no truth, just a position that repositions as we learn. Etienne Wenger (2000), acknowledges learning as social participation, at the core of what makes us human beings, capable of meaningful knowing. Brookfield (2017), holds true value to considering different lens, advocating colleague's perspectives as they understand the context of the environment you work within, giving a different perspective to uncover of affirm assumptions. By engaging with colleagues throughout this process, I have had access to the rich resource of practitioner knowledge, enabling me to 'let go' of my assumptions, repositioning my stance in response to evolved thinking.

My dissemination outlines action to be taken as a result from this research, however this study has revealed other questions which should not be dismissed, deserving further exploration. Limitations of ranking questions left me unable to explore the true extent of practitioner knowledge on 'specialisation' within early years, a 78% non-committal response indicating a lack of knowledge of potential progression routes within the sector. Future research could usefully explore the extent of this and be key to addressing the concerns outlined in the Early Years Workforce Strategy, (DfE, 2017), regarding the critical state of the workforce. Societal changes clearly have implications to the sector, exploration within the literature review highlighted concerns over the 'constant manipulation of our remit' (Morris, 2017), however I challenge that with change comes opportunity, with the development of new skills we can create a different landscape for the early years workforce. In a period of uncertainty for the sector, we must embrace these opportunities.

I now come to consider my role as leader and how I can best learn from this experience. The fact that 100% of my team were motivated by supporting children and families, placed with a 100% response to being proud of the job they do, is a powerful message, and I can't help but feel proud of this, however I must not be complacent, I need to be open minded to how feelings can change rapidly. This is a relational job and there is an emotional investment to be made, bringing with it a

vulnerability. As my management team so eloquently described, 'it does all filter down, it goes from the leader, to our level of management, then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again'. Without strong leadership there is potential for this structure to break down and so I recognise I need to nurture myself to avoid 'practitioner burnout' (Taggart, 2015), to practice what I preach, (Callan and Reed, 2011).

Empowerment of the team has been a positive outcome from this study, collaborative working growing practitioner confidence. By stepping aside as moderator for the focus group discussion, the management team have developed a trusting, respectful environment to listen and be heard by others. Positive feedback from this experience has resulted in professional discussions forming part of normal practice, a recent discussion initiated to discuss whether the current room layout met the needs of the cohort. My aim is to extend the opportunity of 'professional discussion' to the whole team, however I do not wish to rush this, sensitivity is required when enabling group discussion to ensure everyone is heard, I hope to perfect the skills of the management team in their abilities to facilitate discussion before introducing further individuals, ensuring I meet my ethical duties whilst;

'Developing the ability to stand back and see things more clearly and consider how to give voice to those within the setting' Goodfellow et al, 2010. (as cited by Reed and Walker. P.60)

At the start of this process I deliberated over my research question which considered the personal and professional development needs of the workforce, the decision to omit 'personal', due to time limitations of a small-scale research project. As I reflect on my work I recognise that 'personal' needs have been central to my study, it is my role as leader to look further than 'professional development', considering the emotional well-being of individuals. This emotional investment can have far reaching implications to all stakeholders reminding me of my work last year which recognised well-being as being as crucial to the adult, as for the children in our care;

'Adults need to be resilient and have a good sense of well-being themselves. we need to think about the adult's self-worth and confidence and how this is transmitted to children' Manning Morton, (2014).

Word count:7513

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Appendice 1 – Ethical Approval**Application for Ethical Approval (Student)**

To be completed by students proposing to undertake ANY research involving humans [that is research with living human beings; human beings who have died (cadavers, human remains and body parts); embryos and fetuses, human tissue, DNA and bodily fluids; data and records relating to humans; human burial sites] or animals.

Section A: Researcher and Project Details

Student:	
Email:	
Institute:	Education
Student status:	Undergraduate
Supervisor/Tutor/Module leader:	
Project Title:	What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?
Project funding:	None

Section B: Checklist

	Yes	No
1. Does your proposed research involve the collection of data from human participants?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does your proposed research require access to secondary data or documentary material of a sensitive or confidential nature from other organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does your proposed research involve the use of data or documentary material which (a) is not anonymised and (b) is of a sensitive or confidential nature and (c) relates to the living or recently deceased?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Does your proposed research involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Will your proposed research require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Will financial inducements be offered to participants in your proposed research beyond reasonable expenses and/or compensation for time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Will your proposed research involve collection of data relating to sensitive topics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Is pain or discomfort likely to result from your proposed research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Could your proposed research induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in your proposed research without their knowledge and consent at the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. Does your proposed research involve deception?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12. Will your proposed research require the gathering of information about unlawful activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. Will invasive procedures be part of your proposed research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14. Will your proposed research involve prolonged, high intensity or repetitive testing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Does your proposed research involve the testing or observation of animals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Does your proposed research involve collection of DNA, cells, tissues or other samples from humans or animals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
17. Does your proposed research involve human remains?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18. Does your proposed research involve human burial sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19. Will the proposed data collection in part or in whole be undertaken outside the UK?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20. Does your proposed research involve NHS patients, staff or premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If the answers to any of these questions change during the course of your research, you must alert your Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader immediately.

Signatures

By signing below, we declare that we have answered the questions above honestly and to the best of our knowledge:

Student:**Date:****Supervisor/Tutor/****Date:****Module Leader**

If you have answered NO to all questions you should now submit this form to your Institute Ethics Coordinator.

If you have answered YES to one or more questions you must now complete **Section C** (below) and submit to your Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader unless you have answered yes to q.20. In this case you should first contact Dr John-Paul Wilson (j.wilson@worc.ac.uk) to discuss whether you will need to submit to NHS ethical approval processes.

Section C: Full Application

Details of the research

Outline the context and rationale for the research, the aims and objectives of the research and the methods of data collection

My journey

It has taken a lot of energy, informal research and personal reflection to reach my current research question, and for this reason I felt it important to document my journey, giving weight and meaning to my action research project. I would firstly like to thank my colleagues, tutors and critical friend for listening and offering their own thoughts which have been key to me reaching a question that I am truly excited about. Although this process has been challenging I realise that the struggle I have gone through has enhanced my understanding of how to pull all my thoughts together and I have been pleasantly surprised at the many links I have noticed between previous assignments, practice and new research.

My journey began, (as detailed in my reflective journals, appendice 7) as a passion to address the gap in knowledge of child development within my team, I initially presumed this was a causal effect from the change in early years qualifications over the past two decades. Having personally completed a level 2 and 3 cache qualification I felt the content lacked depth and was not sufficient to give the practitioners a good knowledge of child development. My reading of 'Foundations for Quality', (Nutbrown, C. 2012) resonated with me, the report recognising current qualifications lacked 'rigour and depth', however this report was 6 years ago, and I was curious as to whether improvements had since been made. The Early years workforce strategy, (Department for Education, 2017) identified inconsistencies in the quality of training in the sector, resulting in some staff being unable to perform the role they are certificated to deliver. I recognised that in my position as a leader I needed to make a difference, current training around child development may be inconsistent (in my opinion), but I needed to be proactive in ensuring my team have the opportunities to continue their own learning and professional development, I need to narrow the gap. The question now was how I do this effectively?

It was at this time that I began to consider how I could design and implement a child development program for a team of practitioners who come from many different backgrounds and experiences. I thought about my own university experience and how this has taught me that education is about exploring possibilities, it is an individual path, where our beliefs and values contribute to who we are and the richness of our journey. I concluded that a rigid child development program was not the answer, instead it needed to be a journey of reflection, I needed to promote a reflective ethos for the whole team. It was here I noticed a very significant link, having just re-branded my setting my new tag line is, 'Nurturing hearts and minds on a path of possibilities', when developing this I was thinking of children in our care, but I now come to the realisation that this is as relevant to my practitioners as it is to children. I had now come to what I believed would be my research question;

'How do I provide an enabling environment for Early years practitioners and what barriers exist to providing this?'

However, after a face to face session with Mike Reed and feedback from my tutor I realised my project was far to extensive and it was time to go back to the drawing board. I felt frustrated and deflated at this point as this was an area I was so passionate about yet couldn't see clearly how to proceed, until a chance conversation with a colleague.

My office manager was keen to talk to me about her learnings from a human resources course where she had been introduced to the term 'Millennial employees', defined as employees born between 1980's and 2000, a generation growing up in a time of technological growth and with differing needs to other generations. This struck a chord with me, having just completed an exit interview with a practitioner who had highlighted the need for more regular reassurance, this supported the thoughts that my colleague had shared, 'millennial employees need regular feedback and structure'. This conversation then evolved into how all our team have different needs based upon their own life experiences, I realised at this point that this may be the key to my study, identifying those needs and motivating factors for the individual.

I then began to reflect about my team, recognising the richness of diversity, including 'Millennial' employees, older generations who have been in this sector for 20 years, older employees who have come into the sector much later in life and with many different cultural and social experiences. This led me to consider my own role and how I can effectively mentor such a diverse team, ensuring I consider their own unique needs whilst supporting their professional development.

My reflections and learnings have now come to a point where I must decide on a research question. To summarise I have identified several gaps in early years workforce development within my setting, the gap in child development knowledge across my team, my role as a mentor to a diverse team and developing a reflective ethos across the setting. Although these areas are clearly linked I still needed to drill down to a more compact researchable question, I needed to discover what the needs of my workforce were before attempting to address these. I was also very aware that my thoughts and reflections were based on my personal observations and opinion however I was yet to evidence this with theory, therefore my research project will aim to substantiate these claims. Therefore, my question will be;

What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?

Where will the research take place?

The research will take place within the early years setting that I manage, it is a committee run, charity pre-school based in a rural area, offering care from 2-12-year olds from 8am – 6pm term time only. We run from the local memorial hall and although the main user we do occasionally have to pack away.

I currently have 12 practitioners, 7 of which who work predominantly within the early years pre-school with ages ranging from 2-4 years, and it is this age range that will form the focus of my study. I will also be asking for support from my critical friend and human resources manager who have both been key to the formulation of my research question.

What research approach will I be using?

My reading has exposed me to a variety of research methods which I have been considering for my project, however I have found this complex and have experienced great difficulty in establishing which would be most effective for my research project. However, my research question has come from my passion to improve practice through my own self-improvement, I want to make a difference and I have clear

reasons for this. I want my research to have value and for this reason I believe an action research approach will provide me with the structure to achieve this.

My research will be adopting a qualitative approach as it is my intention to discover the 'practitioner' experience, by seeking to find the true opinions of each individual, and by truly listening to my participants voice I can ensure I take an interpretivists stance (Walker and Solvason, 2014). This will give weight and if done correctly give value to my project.

What methods of data collection will I use?

I will begin my research project with a focus group consisting of my management team which includes 2 deputy managers and 1 human resources/office manager. This focus group will be facilitated by my human resources manager as I am aware my presence may influence responses and behaviour of the participants, I will however devise questions for discussion, to ensure there is a structure to the process. (Appendice 5). This discussion will be recorded and transcribed to identify some key themes for development, which will then form the basis for questionnaires, gathering data from the rest of the team, these will be completed anonymously to ensure a safe environment to speak openly and honestly. After reviewing my questionnaire responses, I may then carry out interviews to gain a more in-depth knowledge of the practitioner's experience. In addition to this I will be completing a literature review, by using these three sources of information I am 'triangulating' my data and getting a good overview on the subject matter both theoretical and in practice.

By opening up this research to a participant who does not work directly with the employees on a day to day basis (HR manager) I will be gaining a different perspective to the subject adding another element to the research.

I will also keep a journal throughout this research project as this is an action research project for self-development. The path I have already taken already to get to my current research question has been a long one, so I predict this could possibly be true of the entire research project and I need to document this journey.

My critical friend will play a key part of the whole process, keeping me on track and ensuring I meet ethical considerations as the project evolves.

(Please see appendice 6 for sample questionnaire).

How will I feedback data?

As this is an action research project within the setting I manage, I will feedback to my team when I have analysed my data and put any improvements in place, explaining the rationale behind these. I ultimately want to develop a reflective practice, so it is vital that I involve the team along the way with the aim to develop a community of practice. (Wenger, 2000).

Who are your participants/subjects?

Critical friend – My deputy (university graduate).
Early years practitioners.
Early years managers.
Human resources/office manager

How do you intend to recruit your participants?

This research project will be using a convenience sample of participants drawn from within my setting, who volunteer to take part, there will be no financial incentives or compensations paid. As I manage my current setting, where the majority of research will take place I will need to gain consent from my committee and they will be the gatekeeper for this project. (Appendice 4).

I will gauge interest in the research project firstly informally by offering a taste of what the research will be about and my reasons behind the research question, this will be communicated through my weekly management meeting and weekly email to the whole team and through general discussion as I work with the team on a daily basis. I will also consult with my critical friend to ensure this will not be detrimental to the setting and participants. I will then contact potential participants on a more formal basis in the format of a letter of invitation, outlining the stages of the project and the part they may play in this, with an opportunity to ask questions before signing any consents. (Appendice 2).

I need to strongly consider my position within the setting, I need to ensure participants are fully comfortable taking part and ensure they know they have a choice, they need to feel valued and listened to and have the power to withdraw from the project at any time. I will ensure I read body language and listen sensitively to any concerns ensuring the team are fully supported and my priority.

How will you gain informed consent/assent?

As all participants are adults I will use written consent forms with a description of the research project and the rationale behind this. This information sheet will also have clear instructions on how to withdraw from the project at any time or how to withdraw their data at a later date, recognising that informed consent is sought throughout the project and is not a single event. (Appendice 2 & 3).

Throughout the process I will also refer to the settings policy and procedures and code of ethics which outlines how I wish to act when undertaking research.

Confidentiality, anonymity, data storage and disposal

- Confidentiality – All notes and journal entries will be kept on a PC and will be password protected, so only I have access. Questionnaires will be sent out by my critical friend via email, once completed by participants they will be returned to her then forwarded to me anonymously.
- This is so practitioners know they cannot be identified by handwriting, giving them a sense of security that they can answer openly and honestly.
- Anonymity – All questionnaires and professional discussion respondents will be kept anonymous, names will not be used at any time.
- Data storage – data will be on a password protected PC and a voice recorder. The voice recorder will be locked in a filing cabinet to which I only have access.
- Disposal – All data will be destroyed immediately after I have received my assignment grading.

Potential risks to participants/subjects

Due to the subject matter of my research project I predict any risks to participants as minimal, however I must at all times be aware of the stability of my participants emotional state. Discussion and reflection may bring vulnerability, the data I am seeking is about the practitioner experience and I need to be aware that sometimes

reflection of oneself can unveil uncomfortable feelings, effecting self-esteem and team morale.

I need to protect participants and ensure that the research methods are designed with them in mind, ensuring this meets their needs, I need to ask myself how I can make the process as seamless as possible for them, without causing them any harm or distress. I also need to ensure I do not disrupt the setting through my research, I will need to consult with my management team as to the logistics of the project.

Other ethical issues

As the manager of the setting and an insider to the research I need to ensure my position as researcher is clarified, considering the potential for researcher bias. I need to recognise that my position will influence the research and explore how this may present, I need to ensure this is a positive experience, through having regular dialogue with my critical friend I can ensure I keep a very clear view of this.

I have a duty of care to my team and need to ensure this is threaded through the research project. I need to be open and honest throughout the research, with all participants and ensure they feel respected and reassured that their involvement in the research will not negatively impact them. If practitioners, choose not to participate or withdraw during the project I will need to ensure they feel respected for their decision and be sensitive to how they may be feeling.

Published ethical guidelines to be followed

BERA (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. London: BERA
SERA (2005) Scottish Educational Research Association
British Association for Early Childhood Code of Ethics (2011)

Student Declaration

I have read the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant codes of practice or guidelines and I have identified and addressed the ethical issues in my research honestly and to the best of my knowledge

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader Declaration

(Tick as applicable)

☐ I am satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grant ethical approval for this research

☐ I refer this Application for Ethical Approval to the Institute Ethics Committee

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Institute Ethics Coordinator Declaration

(Tick as applicable)

☐ The Institute Ethics Committee is satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grants ethical approval for this research.

☐ The Institute Ethics Committee is **not** satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and refers this Application for Ethical Approval to the University's Ethics & Research Governance Committee

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Chair of the Ethics & Research Governance Committee Declaration

(Tick as applicable)

☐ The Ethics & Research Governance Committee is satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grants ethical approval for this research.

☐ The Ethics & Research Governance Committee is **not** satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues in this research and **does not** grant ethical approval for this research.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Declaration

I have read the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant codes of practice or guidelines and I have identified and addressed the ethical issues in my research honestly and to the best of my knowledge

Signature:

Zoe Corfield

Date:

10/11/2017**Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader Declaration**

(Tick as applicable)

☒ I am satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grant ethical approval for this research

☐ I refer this Application for Ethical Approval to the Institute Ethics Committee

Signature:

Anthony Giel

Date:

25.01.2018**Institute Ethics Coordinator Declaration**

(Tick as applicable)

☐ The Institute Ethics Committee is satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grants ethical approval for this research.

☐ The Institute Ethics Committee is **not** satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and refers this Application for Ethical Approval to the University's Ethics & Research Governance Committee

Signature:

Date:

Chair of the Ethics & Research Governance Committee Declaration

(Tick as applicable)

☐ The Ethics & Research Governance Committee is satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grants ethical approval for this research.

☐ The Ethics & Research Governance Committee is **not** satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues in this research and **does not** grant ethical approval for this research.

Signature:

Date:

Appendice 2 – Participant Information Sheet.

Research Project; What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?

Dear Participant,

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to consider your involvement in my small research project which forms part of my Early years foundation degree. This information sheet has been devised to help you better understand the reasons behind my area of study and the role of the participant during the project.

The purpose of the research project

To explore how I as a leader, can be more effective in supporting and promoting continuous professional development for individuals within a team culture. This research project will begin with exploring what are these needs, it is my intention to discover the 'practitioner' experience, by seeking to find the true opinions of each individual, and by truly listening to my participants voice. I would like to state here that this project is about my own personal development and is not a judgement on individuals job performance.

How will this study benefit the setting?

I am undertaking an action research project, meaning through identifying and understanding the needs of practitioners I can then begin to address how I meet those needs, hopefully impacting practice and team morale positively.

What does participation involve?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and is not a job requirement, participation or non-participation will not be judged and will not affect your working relationships. Should you agree to participate, the process will involve the completion of a questionnaire through an anonymised email response, with the possibility of an interview should the responses require further clarity or expansion, however you are not obliged to participate further. I will be inviting the management participants to a closed focus group which will be voice recorded and held away from the setting for the purposes of confidentiality.

Risks to the participant and rights to withdraw

As a participant you have the right to withdraw consent at any time as well as the right not to answer questions, with an assurance that this will not adversely affect your working relationships. Consent will be sought throughout the process and reviewed regularly to ensure participants are happy to continue. Should you wish to withdraw please email [REDACTED] you do not have to give reasons for this. I foresee minimal risks to this research other than time commitments and so where possible responses will be captured within normal working hours and not impact personal time.

Handling of data

All information you provide will be anonymised and treated confidentially, if you request confidentiality, beyond anonymised quotes, information you provide will be treated only as a source of background information, alongside literature-based research. The information gained from this research will only be used for the above objectives, and will not be used for any other purpose, all data will be handled with upmost care and destroyed ethically once the research project is finalised. Further information can be sought by researcher, [REDACTED] or in person.

Appendice 3 – Participant Consent Form.**Research Project;**

What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?

Researcher details;

██████████

██

To be completed by participant;

Statement	Initials of participant
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research project. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, received satisfactory answers and have received enough information about this research project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	
I understand that my research data may be used for a further project in anonymous form, but I am able to opt out of this if I so wish, by ticking here. <input type="checkbox"/>	

Additional information to be completed by management team;

Statement	Initials of participant
I agree to the interview/focus group to be audio recorded.	
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	

To be completed by all participants;

I agree to participate in this research project.	
Signed (participant)	Date
Name in block letters	
Signature of researcher	Date

Appendice 4 – Committee Consent Form.**Research Project;**

What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?

Researcher details;

██████████

██

To be completed by Committee;

Statement	Initials of Committee member
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research project. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, received satisfactory answers and have received enough information about this research project.	
I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the pre-schools involvement at any time, without giving reason.	
I understand that my research data may be used for a further project in anonymous form, but I am able to opt out of this if I so wish, by ticking here. <input type="checkbox"/>	

Additional information to be completed by management team;

Statement	Initials of participant
I agree to the interview/focus group to be audio recorded.	
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	

To be completed by all participants;

I agree to participate in this research project.	
Signed (participant)	Date
Name in block letters	
Signature of researcher	Date

Appendice 5 – Sample Focus Group Statements for Discussion.

Mac Lachlan's (2005) paper, 'Focus Group Methodology and its Usefulness in Early Childhood Research' identifies the value of focus groups, providing a safe environment to bounce ideas off each other, resulting in new ideas and a sense of shared responsibility which can build momentum after the group session, benefiting the practice as a whole.

Mac Lachlan identifies five different types of questions that can be use in a focus group, suggesting the questions gradually develop to gain more detailed responses as the group becomes more confident in their involvement.

Below are a sample of questions I will be using to structure the focus group.

Opening question – How long have you worked in Early years?

Introductory questions – How did you feel when first coming into the Early years workforce?

Transition questions – Looking back how were you supported in your role? Do you feel your training prepared you for the role you were employed to do?

Key Questions – Thinking about individuals within our current team in what ways are their professional needs different to others? Can you explain why this may be?

Ending questions – How can we ensure we meet all the needs of our workforce within our own setting? What do you see as the key challenges in meeting different needs of the workforce?

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you feel is relevant to this study; 'What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce?

As the leader of my setting I have chosen to not chair the focus group, as I feel this may have a detrimental effect on data, I want my participants to feel comfortable to speak freely and honestly to give true value to my study, with no influence from myself. For this reason, I have asked one of my participants to lead proceedings and will brief them on the above questions and some guidelines on how to manage a focus group effectively.

Below are guidelines taken from my readings of Kruegar, R. and Casey, M.A. (2000) in Focus Groups: a practical guide for applied research 3rd edition. London: Sage Publications

Characteristics of effective moderators;

- ✓ Looks at participants when they are talking.
- ✓ Demonstrates active listening techniques.
- ✓ Uses non-verbal communication techniques.
- ✓ Demonstrates empathy and positive regard for participants.
- ✓ Has working knowledge on the topic.
- ✓ Restrains from expressing personal views.
- ✓ One way that a moderator can communicate respect and encourage participation is through the use of an effective introductory statement. The introduction should communicate the purpose for which the group has been assembled, why the participants were selected, the ground rules for participation, and the opening question.
- ✓ Most importantly, the introduction should make the participants feel comfortable and welcome.

Appendice 6 – Sample Questionnaire Questions.

The questionnaire will be designed from key themes coming from the focus group data, however will first establish some generalised information about the participants.

1. How many years have you been working in the Early years sector?
2. What is your highest-level qualification?
3. Do you feel this training prepared you for the role you were employed to do?
4. When did you last attend any training in or outside of the setting?
5. Do you feel this training supported your current role?

Further questions will be designed after I have analysed data from the focus group. This will then be sent to my tutor for ethical approval. I will also as an extra precaution share this with my critical friend.

Appendice 7 – Reflective Journal.

Entry – October 16th, 2017

In my setting and beyond, I have identified a real gap in practitioner's knowledge on Child development and the power of play, this has come over a period of time, from professional discussion, observation and the on-line learning journal, Tapestry which has brought to my attention the inconsistencies in how we assess children in our care.

My team of practitioners come from many different backgrounds and experiences which has great advantages in providing a wide and varied approach, I am however noticing a knowledge gap in those of us who completed our training through many of the work-based qualifications run through outside companies and the NNEB qualification. I have three staff members who completed the old style NNEB qualification and their knowledge of child development is far more rich and in touch with the children, now some people may say that this is because this is an older qualification and these practitioners, have learned from experience over the years, which yes this will be true, but when I listen to their experiences whilst taking on this qualification I am in awe and quite humbled by their experiences. They worked in a variety of settings including hospitals and SEN settings and had access to so many rich experiences, it was a full-time course where if you didn't meet the grade then you were out. Now that may seem harsh, but I can't help but feel the qualifications today can be a bit 'hand held' and I am not aware of anyone failing their level 2 or 3 qualification.

I can speak honestly as I achieved my level 2 and level 3 through a Cache provider and if I am honest, although I was proud to be a level 3, I did not feel any more prepared to understand the complexities of child development. The child development module was not fit for purpose and was just a copy and paste developmental milestones table. I didn't know how to properly observe or unpick what I was seeing, yet the NNEB qualified staff talk proudly of the 100 observations they had to do on the varied placements, this has stuck with them throughout their career and I can go to any of these practitioners who can tell me exactly what they are seeing during play.

I am lucky to have these skills in my current team however, these are the older generation of practitioner and I am worried we are soon to lose these skills across the Early years work force, my challenge is how I embrace these skills and pass them on? I have approached various external professionals to help me with this, to put together a training package which runs deeper than EYFS statements, but surprisingly there is nothing out there. I have been told by these professionals, that I don't need this training, I am a good setting, what's the problem? This worries me even more as I am not being listened too, and I have genuine concerns.

I was lucky enough last week to attend a conference ran by Worcestershire Children and Young People, this involved many different professionals and carers coming together to discuss the local offer for SEND provision. As part of this conference we were asked to join in discussion on a variety of topics, I chose to go to the workforce strategy team and fed back my thoughts on the need to get the basics right first, with

child development training, this will then impact positively on identifying those children who may need extra support. I was so relieved to meet another nursery practitioner who agreed whole heartedly and so evolved a full discussion around the table about the barriers we face with a younger, less skilled workforce, through no fault of their own.

I feel empowered to make positive change however I understand this will be no simple task, my reading of Jean Mc Niff (2002) resonated with me, this will be a journey of discovery, there are no final statements, it is on-going as I engage in this educational journey, with an unknown destination.

Entry – October 16th, 2017

So, I am now dedicated to the very broad subject of how I can as a leader narrow the gap in the knowledge of child development across all my practitioners?

This has been on my agenda for some time and also forms part of my SEF where I have committed to develop my own in-house training package. I now wonder why I keep pushing it to the back of the pile of jobs I have before me, and it's because I don't really know how to write this! However, after many months of thought I had a lightbulb moment

I can't be the one lecturing my team, this is not how we learn, have I learned nothing from my degree course? I need to encourage dialogue, professional discussion, ignite the passion, explore the possibilities, the current qualifications fail to do this (in my opinion), so there is no point just regurgitating this! Blackboard holds all the answers! I need a forum, a place where we can unpick what play looks like, feels like, we can talk of our own experiences of childhood, understand better cultural and historical contexts. I'm excited now!

So, this is now the plan, I am not going to sit down and write a six-week child development course! I am going to begin by forming a safe place where we can discuss development and play, I can set weekly tasks which may be a reflection, an observation, an activity, the opportunities are endless. The program will then develop as needs and interests emerge, we follow child's interests let's do the same for our practitioners. Of course, there will be many ethical considerations here and this will have to be thought out carefully, but I believe is the way to go. There will be room for more formal training from other professionals but by letting the practitioners lead this themselves I feel will have better outcomes for all.

Entry – October 16th, 2017

It has just come to mind a conversation I had with my mentor the other week about some frustrations we have been having with how the practitioners in the setting are moving away from getting down on the floor with the children. We couldn't work out why this was as this has always been one of our strengths. It seems to of got worse

since introducing a specific key person time, I did this to ensure they had time in the busy day to complete observations and plan for next steps for our revised planning document which ensured we were always planning from the interests the week before.

So, all good reasons but since this time has been introduced the practitioners appear less flexible in their time with the children, they seem more obsessed with observations and are using the time but not as effectively as I would like. As a leader I need to let my team know that this key person time is about professional development not just writing up obs, it could be used to observe a colleague, be with their key children, research a topic, explore the resources or have a professional discussion.

Another reason maybe that I have been pulled off the floor to complete the many jobs coming from running a busy business, such as accounts and a current rebranding project. Although I feel I have a strong team I think my absence on the floor has affected the dynamics. The start of the academic term can be difficult as we are overstaffed as numbers are low, however this is the time we set the standards for the year ahead, a child's comment really hit home with me last week when she told me she wanted to pretend to be the teacher Zoe, I asked her what does Zoe do? She replied "office". That hit me hard and I need to rethink my own priorities, as I can't seem to do it all!

My conversation with my mentor concluded that we need to get back on the floor with the children, take it back to basics and learn to be with the children and see where the play leads us rather than trying to fit the play to a statement in the EYFS. It's as if we need to take away observation and instead have a period of reflection at the end of the day. I have a practitioner who does this well (NNEB trained) she holds all information in her head and can then write up her detailed observations at the end of the day, I can't do this and there is the argument is she remembering it how it happened? But on the other hand, by not writing it as its happening she is in the moment.

All these thoughts have come together to the theme I would like to research this year and is helping me to refine my question more.

My first draft question was - how can I as a leader narrow the gap in the knowledge of child development across all my practitioners?

I know this is way too broad, I now have to find a way of stripping it back.

Entry - October 16th, 2017

So, I want to develop a program of support for my team to improve knowledge of child development, I have established it needs to be a program that naturally evolves and needs to be an ongoing dialogue where we are learning together. So, drilling down the question I need to think about what I want the training to achieve?

I want to the team to;

Talk openly

Reflecting

Empower them

Lead their own journey

Work together

Share and pull on experiences

Improve professional confidence

So I'm now thinking the question needs to be around these aims rather than specifically child development, it's about tapping into the team's skills first, learning about themselves before taking on the topic? More thinking needed!

Entry – October 17, 2017

Having just listened to a podcast for my other module, (Hanson and Appleby 2014), on reflective activism, I was interested to hear the comments made about which theorist would they like to come for tea and a chat! They chose John Dewey and his interest in 'curiosity', Karen talks of how children have an innate curiosity but as we get older it is 'squeezed' out of us, we need to gain this curiosity back to last our whole lifetime.

This again links nicely into how my question is evolving and it seems I am moving towards creating a reflective team and the impact that then has on the shared knowledge regarding child development.

Entry – October 28, 2017

I think I have just had a light bulb moment!

I consider part of my writing for my other module;

Appleby, in Reed and Canning (2010), identifies that reflective practice needs to be meaningful and purposeful, she talks of exploring and developing as key aspects of practice, it is here I noticed a connection. When talking about children within my setting this is similar vocabulary, we proclaim to listen to the child's voice, follow their interests, allow them to explore and create their own meanings, providing an enabling environment where they can learn and grow. We need to provide the same for our practitioners and effective listening is key to this, therefore will form the basis of my focus this semester.

So, in summary, to create a reflective culture within the whole setting I need to ensure I am providing an enabling environment for my practitioners. My ethos for the children in my setting should be the same for my practitioners, I need to give them time to discover and draw their own meanings, each practitioner is on their own journey which they lead.

This also links to;

As I conclude my thoughts I acknowledge another link, my new tag line for the re-branding of my setting, 'Nurturing hearts and minds on a path of possibilities', portraying the same message, that possibilities can be endless if we are open to join this journey of self-discovery and reflection.

I can now see how these two modules interlink and can complement each other. In module 2503 I will be looking at how to be an effective listener and, in this module, I will consider what other elements create an enabling environment for my practitioners.

So, my question for 2504 will be;

What does an enabling environment for practitioners look like?

Entry – November 9th, 2017

I just have a few minutes to write down and reflect on my progress with my research question!

Mikes session on Saturday was as interesting and inspiring as always and made me realise how complex my project was, simple is best and so I have had to go back to the drawing board again! Rosie's comments were similar, expressing concern that I was planning a very time-consuming study. To be honest at this point I felt very deflated and somewhat panicked and so have not looked at the module for a few days, it's easier to leave it than face up to my difficulties I am in.

However on Monday, I saw some light at the end of the tunnel, my human resources lady was very excited to share with me some information she had found very interesting in her on Professional development. She has been completing a course and had been learning about Millennial employees, which in a nutshell are those employees born late 70's, 80's and 90's who have very different needs in the workplace than older employees. This is down to their values and society changes. She urged me to look more into this as it really related to those employees I am desperate to support in their role but find hard to truly engage. An exit interview for one of my team also identified that she would have liked more regular reassurance that she was doing well.

Entry – November 9th, 2017

So, I am now thinking I need to be looking how I change my management style to support these employees, my original thoughts on current child development training not being fit for purpose helps me to consider whether this is the reason, we are not meeting the needs of our employees as their needs have evolved. This also links to a conversation I have had, just to day with a colleague who is trying to achieve her level 3 qualification with a well-known provider, she is deeply unhappy with the lack of support the provider have given her they are not supporting her needs (she is in fact an older employee).

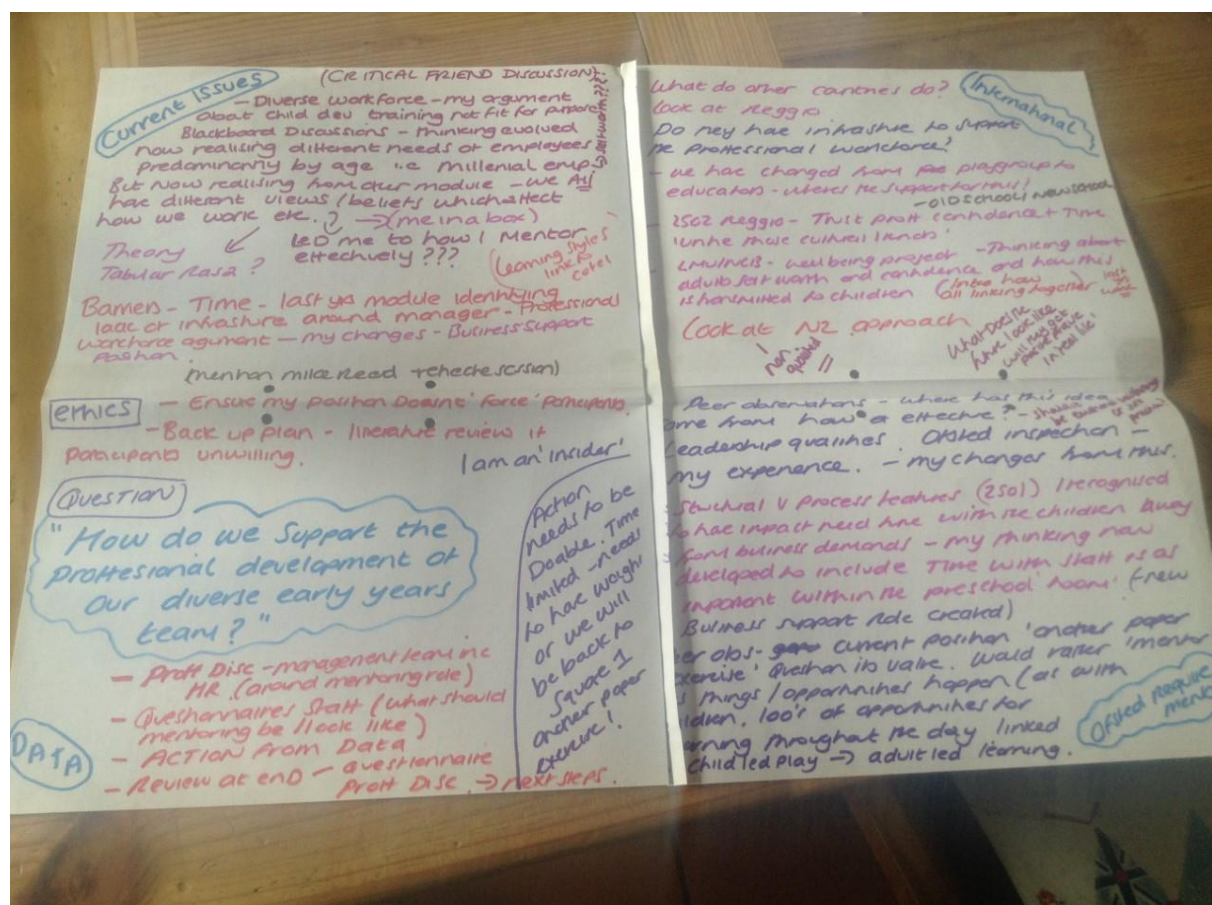
So now my question is nearer where I believe it needs to be;

How do I support the new generation of early years practitioners?

Entry – November 10th, 2017

Okay. So, after a meeting with my critical friend and sharing my mind map with her we have collaboratively come to the question;

How do we support the professional development of our diverse early years team?



Entry - January 20th, 2018

I am now starting to research and read around my question. I have devised a literature grid as advised by Mike Reed to organise my research. Having read Walker and Solvason I have decided to break down my main question into smaller ones and focus my research around these;

Question 1 – Are current childcare qualifications fit for purpose on entry into the Early years workforce?

Question 2- How is the Early Years workforce changing?

Question 3 – How can I effectively mentor an everchanging Early years workforce?

Entry - January 27th, 2018

This week I have started on my first question **Are current childcare qualifications fit for purpose on entry into the Early years workforce?** and read a wide range of literature to include;

The Early years workforce strategy 2017

Pacey – Towards an Early year's workforce development strategy for England 2016

Nutbrown Review – Independent review of early education and childcare qualifications 2012

The British Association for Early Childhood Education 2016 – This was very interesting and spoke of the challenges all four nations face. I was shocked to see they have all different legislation and curriculum as this has never dawned on me before.

Attitudes and the Early years – 2014 – Moved on from qualifications to having the right character and disposition for the role. Looks at different countries so made me realise I need to clarify my research further – Am I looking just England, or UK or worldwide?

Continuing professional development and the early years workforce 2013 – Talks of the right environment for CPD – links to my new role introduced to setting of Early years business development co-ordinator.

Realise now it was the Nutbrown report that recognised qualifications were not fit for purpose – has this now changed? So, my research will start from 2012 onwards.

I have used these sources to give a clear and rigorous review of up to date understanding of the subject, look at how literature has informed and influenced my research. A theoretical view of what is taking place. Need to start off broad and then funnel down.

I now need to identify a gap that my research can fill.

Entry - January 30th, 2018 – F2F session with tutor.

During this face to face session we signed off my ethical approval form and discussed the literature review. Points from the discussion below;

- My tutor had misunderstood what I meant by 'changing' workforce she felt it was regarding the changing role whereas I was considering the different learning styles, generations and personal needs now in the workplace especially with a rise in mental health issues and how we now recognise the need to support our team, adapting to their needs. I also wanted to touch on how the younger team access and use ICT within their role. This has caused me to consider how the role has changed – we are the main contact for these families, we support the whole family not just the child, we are now completing home visits, something a health visitor once did but funding has ceased, (this links to Bronfenbrenner and the child's eco-system). We are now a multi professional workforce. Therefore, we need to support our workforce, so they are equipped to effectively deal with this changing role – the workforce needs to change to do this?
- My tutor suggested that when researching for my literature review that I use key words from my title to ensure I do not get side tracked. She recommended reading of SEED and Every Child Matters as these speak of the 'changing workforce'.
- My tutor then advised me on how to introduce my literature review and words to include.
- My tutor could not clarify whether to answer questions funnelled down from my main question leaving me slightly confused. However, I do now realise my questions were too broad, especially question 3 regarding mentoring, I now recognise this to be a completely different subject from my main questions, so I now need to refine these.

Entry - February 1st, 2018

Having read Walker and Solvason chapter on literature reviews, I have decided to stay with answering questions within my literature review, but have changed these to;

How has the role of the Early years workforce changed over the past 25 years?

How do the Early years workforce best develop skills to meet the demands of the role?

What are the professional development needs of an Early year's workforce?

Once researching and writing my literature review I may find another question comes to light but I do not want to force this until it happens.

Entry - February 2nd, 2018

More reading!

Exploring the continuing professional development needs of pedagogical practitioners in Early years – 2012

Attitudes and the early years workforce 2015

Will the early years professional please stand up! 2013

SEED

Continuing professional development and the early years workforce 2013

Sustained shared thinking in the early years 2014 – This highlighted need more than a qualification.

The role of the adult in early years settings 2012.

Entry - February 5th, 2018

After a meeting with my critical friend I issued my consents for the gatekeepers of the project and the proposed participants for the focus group, I presented my research project during a management meeting. I now await their responses or further questions.

February 11th, 2018

I have contacted my head of course to ask further advice on the literature review. I have also started a discussion group on Blackboard to support the group on literature reviews.

February 12th, 2018

Scheduled focus group cancelled due to participants illness.

Entry – February 27th, 2018

I am feeling a little anxious at the present time regarding this module, it seems to be a real slow starter and I'm very conscious of the days ticking by. My ethical approval has been signed off and my rationale written with some good feedback received. The literature review has come to a standstill due to time constraints, but I do feel I have a good range of literature to focus on, so I am sure once I have re-focused I can get back into it.

Unfortunately, last week we have had a HR issue with a member of the team and this has had a negative effect on the management team in terms of confidence and also our time. I was due to run the focus group for the first part of my research last week but felt this would have been unethical with everything that had been going on and also because the way everybody was feeling, I plan to now run this tomorrow.

In preparation I have created a welcome letter to the participants (this is in addition to the consents). I have made the decision not to run the focus group, as I did not want data to be biased. I also wanted my management team to speak openly and honestly.

Entry – February 28th, 2018

Okay, so I am feeling a little more relieved now that the focus group has been done, I feel that I can now start getting somewhere with this project. The management team returned back to the setting after their meeting, happy and said how much they actually enjoyed the process, I believe professional discussion can be a really powerful tool, and this is something I have recognised in my other modules work. I hope to now embed this in our weekly practice and then offer it out to the wider team when we are confident in facilitating this.

My job now is to transcribe the data for further analysis, I will then take the main themes running through the discussion to develop into a questionnaire for the wider team.

Entry – March 3rd, 2018.

Today is Saturday and due to snow our face to face has been cancelled, so I planned to work from home and transcribe the audio recording from the focus group. I couldn't believe what a huge job this was, it has literally taken hours, however having to type it word for word has given me the opportunity to really focus on what is being said and clarify the clear themes thread through the whole discussion.

I must admit to my feelings of anxiety when I first began listening, the participants sounded nervous at first and a little reluctant in their answers, and I felt nervous for them. However, I had planned my focus group well after reading Mac Lachlan's, (2005) paper, 'Focus Group Methodology and its usefulness in Early Childhood Research', this had introduced me to the structure of a focus group, identifying five different types of questions, suggesting that the questions develop gradually to gain more detailed responses. This was the case for the focus group, the opening question establishing how long they had worked in early years to gain a better perspective of the individual's starting point. The introductory question started to talk of their feelings, asking them to reflect on how they felt when they first came into the early years workforce, I wanted them to consider this, so they could then maybe take this into the later questions about our current workforce, putting themselves in their shoes.

My transition questions encouraged discussion on their experiences of the training they undertook and the support they may or may not of received, again this was about them but this evolved into the key questions which considered the current workforce we are now part of, I was hoping again, that by thinking about their own experiences this would create a reflective position for the focus group.

My ending questions summarised how we could meet all the needs of the changing workforce and what the key challenges were for this, this helped the group focus on the here and now, hopefully instigating thought into how we could continue to improve.

After listening to the audio, repeatedly I was very happy with my questions and I felt this was a strong starting point to build upon. My feelings moved from anxiety to clarity with a small dose of paranoia! When the participants talk about inspirational

people in their career it made me feel a bit paranoid that they don't see me like this, and am I doing a good job? I want so desperately to be that inspirational leader. I suppose this will always be the case when researching in your own setting, it's so very difficult to stay completely neutral, especially when you put your heart and soul into what you do. I need to ensure I position myself outside of this group whilst analysing the group, but it is clear to me as found in my other module, emotion must be acknowledged in any reflective practice.

Tomorrow I hope to analyse the participants responses and identify the themes for the next stage of my research.

I'm still worrying about my literature review and getting back into that; however, I feel I have made a good start now with the project, my next priority is to continue with these journals and design my questionnaire.

Entry – March 5th, 2018

So, having transcribed the audio recording onto paper and then listening again to the tape, I feel I am now in a good position to identify the key themes coming out of the discussion, these being;

- Support
- Training
- Opportunities
- Perception
- Leadership

I now hope to summarise the data coming out of the focus group and demonstrate how it relates to the above four headings.

Support

There were some powerful reflections on influential people throughout the participants career path, with passionate recounts of how these positive relationships have enhanced their experience of early years and for both professional and personal development. This made me think of how we (the management team) are those people who have the power to make such a difference to practitioners, how this is a privilege but also quite daunting. These people were described as beautiful, kind, caring, understanding and for seeing potential, all traits that you would hope to see in a mentor.

The mentoring system we currently have in place was recognised as a good support to practitioners, but there was some self-doubt in the abilities of the mentor, so this gives me food for thought in how I can further support my management team.

Support of the family is a theme that came up throughout the discussion, and this instigated much thought for me, as I had not considered this before. It was suggested families have a big impact on all practitioners in a number of ways, from the support they give at the start of your career as a young adult, your upbringing and how this impacts your working life through your values and beliefs, the

perception your family have of the role and how this may present in their support to you i.e. do they drive you to progress or think this is a 'stop gap' job? Practitioners who have their own children may have a different perspective on childcare but also, they may need support themselves as running a young family and working can be difficult. In conclusion the role of family was seen as vital reminding me of Bronfenbrenner's work on a child's ecological system, I find myself noticing another link between what children need and that of adults.

When the discussion focused on how we as a management team support our workforce it was recognised that our workforce did have very different needs, generational differences were identified and also a change in society, suggesting that society today is somewhat self-centred. Real life experiences acknowledged how attitudes in the workplace have changed over the years and values and beliefs may differ through the generations, affecting how we complete our job roles. Although it was clear that the needs of the workforce were vast, the participants were confident that the structure of the setting enabled us to meet these needs, we were described as adaptable and the many tools we use to manage the team were seen as a positive, i.e. meetings, mentoring, communication, supervisions and the role of the HR.

The discussion identified that support positively affects everybody, the management team were described as strong with a wealth of experiences which enables them to support the wider team in terms of teaching and learning but also their emotional wellbeing. They recognised that they are always learning, and the management meetings allow time to nurture this reflective learning environment through working together. The rapport between management and other members of the team was seen as a positive aspect, the participants agreeing that to feel valued in the workplace was key to everything.

Training

The introductory and transition questions in the focus group considered the participants training experiences and it was evident that the NNEB had left lasting positive memories, participants went into detail about this training and the value to this, recognising the importance of practice-based learning and how this 'marries' together the class based learning and practical elements. They described the subject matter which including bathing, cooking, textiles in addition to child development, skills that the participants found useful in their own experiences as a parent. The variety of placements gave practitioners a good idea on a range of careers they could aim for and a chance to experience these first hand, the participants felt prepared for the roles they were to undertake. In contrast the Cache diploma was described as good for answering questions as the participant was in the workplace before embarking on the training, although they had gone in 'blind' the training had given confirmation on the role they were doing.

In regard to continual professional development it was recognised by all participants that they are learning all the time on a day to day basis as situations arise. 'Little' courses were valued as allowing you to move forwards. It was felt that courses were

different now and that more practical courses were needed to meet the needs of the team. It was also suggested that practitioners may benefit from visiting other settings. An interesting suggestion was that the younger members of the team described as 'millennial employees' may suit better, courses like the NNEB, as they offered structure and clear expectations, the participant suggested this to be a very useful experiment.

Opportunities

It was clear in the discussion that the access to opportunities was important for all the participants and the group had experienced both positive and negative impacts from this. One participant had been given an opportunity to train as a forest school leader and this had clearly led her to a variety of opportunities outside of the setting, building her confidence and skill set, she believes it is this experience that supports her in the management role she is now in. However, in contrast one participant felt 'side stepped', and 'squished', when not put forward for a degree. I sympathise for this participant however with my management head on I also see how difficult it can be to ensure all the team are supported in their professional development, as you cannot give everyone the same opportunities. I recognise that this is the importance of communication and a positive relationship where you can 'tease out' the strengths of each individual and recognise the opportunities unique to them. One participant had worked her way through the setting from nursery worker to manager and described those opportunities as key to prevent her feeling stuck in a rut, she believes this is why she has remained in early years for the past 27 years, it was unanimously agreed that progression was a key driver for practitioners.

Perception

I want to include, 'perception of the role of an early year's practitioner' because this was one of the first things I picked up on when listening to the discussion. The language that the participants used included 'bog standard nursery nurse', 'I was happy doing the washing up'. 'Parents think you just 'play', then when discussing play - 'naively that's how I was... that's what I thought you did all day'. Also, when discussing training through the NNEB it was described as 'proper school'. There was also a discussion on how parents of young practitioners may not see early years as a career, 'that's a job but it's not a long-term goal, is it?'. It was also acknowledged that many practitioners who supported some of the participants early on in their careers, were parents themselves and made up much of the workforce, I wonder if this is the same now? I find this quite disappointing that society may not recognise the important job we do in early years, also that the team may not understand the progression path they could embark on, and so this is an area for further exploration.

Leadership

Leadership was recognised as the additional element, that the participants felt the study should consider. Examples were given of both good and poor leadership and the effect this can have on everybody suggesting both positive and negative experiences filter down from the top. The discussion concluded;

"And that's the thing, it does all filter down, so sort of you know it goes from [REDACTED], to our level of the managers, and then because we are all happy and in a good place it

filters down again, so the staff pick up on that, morale gets better and then you get the best out of them. They want to give more, they want to train more, so it's all of it really isn't it?"

Summary

This focus group has been very powerful, I am very pleased with the questions and how this provoked thought backed up with real life experiences. It was recognised that the workforce had many different and varying needs and the role of the HR within the setting has been a positive impact in recognising and supporting these needs. I now recall Maslow's hierarchy of needs, something learned in school, so I am going to investigate this further to see if this links to this study at all. I also will revisit Bronfenbrenner as I have identified the importance of the practitioners wider ecological system however I need to explore if this is unique to early years as a 'caring' profession or to everybody in general. I will now have a discussion with my critical friend to try to determine the best way forward in the design of a questionnaire to the wider group of participants.

Entry – March 10th, 2018

I had been feeling a little bewildered with regards to this module this week, although I understand this is an independent study, I do not think I was prepared for the intensity of this. I am a person who values subtle encouragement that I am on the right track and without this I have got myself into a bubble of confusion. After struggling yesterday with my literature review and experiencing writers block, today I decided to start again. I have re-read all of my work and started to put this together into my final project as appendices, this has helped me to clarify my thinking and remember how far I have come already on this journey. I discovered journal entries I had long forgotten about, so I am feeling a sense of relief and looking at how I can use these to improve my study. I have had contact with my tutor and have a clear deadline that I would like my data to be collected by the end of March and my literature review written. Having re-read through all my work I have adapted my rationale as I did not feel it read as seamlessly as I would like, with this now re-written I feel in a better place to tackle the literature review.

Entry – March 12th, 2018

Today I am trying to devise my questionnaire to go out to the wider team. I have re-read my summary of the focus group to identify key themes that would be useful to explore further. I feel it is important for the questionnaire to establish how long the participants have worked in early years and the qualification that they had undertaken on entry into the early years workforce. I would also like to investigate whether they felt this qualification prepared them for the work of an early year's practitioner.

The focus group identified traits of inspirational persons in their career path and also discussed how values and beliefs present differently through the generations, this is an area I would like to explore further, identifying motivational factors for participants in their role and also what traits they feel are most important in the work we do.

Perception of the role of the early years practitioner was highlighted in the focus group from both the support group of the practitioner but also in terms of career paths, therefore I hope to explore how participants perceive their role.

Finally, I would like to consider what motivates participants in their role, again this may or may not highlight differences across the generations.

Due to a current grievance being investigated in the workplace, I have chosen questions that are personal and not directly focused on the practices of the setting, I believe this is the correct decision in terms of the ethical ethos of the research study.

Entry March 13th, 2018

Today I have had a meeting with my critical friend to look at the sample questionnaire I have designed. During the discussion we questioned some of the wording used to ensure clarity of the questions. We also added in an additional value we felt was important – that of being reflective. This was a good meeting and we both agreed with the simple changes made the questionnaire meets ethical standards and is ready to now be issued to the participants. As I have changed the questions to a ranking response I no longer need to ask participants to respond via email, instead I will issue them with an envelope to return the responses anonymously should they prefer. The questionnaire requires only a tick in a box, so anonymity should not be an issue in regard to the ethics of the project. I have taken advice from Mike Reeds face to face session and added an additional section where participants have the opportunity to tick a box if they feel the research has been carried out ethically.

Entry March 18th, 2018

I have now finished my search for literature and put this in a grid prioritising my readings and positioning my thoughts (appendices 11 & 12). I now feel in a good position to write my literature review as I have clarity and some clear lines of enquiry.

Entry March 19th, 2018

Today I have received back some of my questionnaires and disappointingly there seems to be some confusion over the two ranking questions, where 3 out of 5 participants have filled this part out incorrectly. After a discussion with my critical friend we realised that this is research in itself, and certainly forms part of the steep learning curve I am currently on. However, we did decide, due to the number I should revisit these two questions with the participants, all of which had signed consent for me to ask them further questions in regard to their responses. I have since done this and await the rest of the responses.

Entry March 21st, 2018

Today was a classic example of the positives to a generational diverse workplace. It was a stressful day due to a pack-away, the children had a lovely morning but coming up to the transition to lunch it became difficult when one child had a full-blown tantrum. I tried everything in my bank of skills and knowledge but could not

calm this child, out of exasperation I asked my level 2 'Baby boomer', who is our kitchen manager for some help, the child instantly calmed and sat with her for a prolonged time, he did have a temperature and was soon collected. Later we had a great discussion about this within the team, recognising that he just needed some calm and as I was trying to run the room and get ready for lunch he possibly picked up on my anxiety. We laughed about it, but my baby boomer told us, 'It's alright you young un's running about but sometimes they just want someone older like a granny, they just need calm'. This links to my reading of Taggart (2015), who labels this, 'getting ready for' thinking, he speaks of practitioners and parents always thinking ahead to the next transition, or next skill to be learned, resulting in a negative counterproductive cycle, weakening our attunement to the child. This has been monumental reading for me, I recognise myself, maybe I need to consider mindfulness for myself and team and learn to 'just be in the moment'.

Appendice 8 – Welcome letter to Participants

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to be part of my research project, 'What are the professional development needs of a changing Early years workforce'.

I have asked [REDACTED] to lead the focus group, so you may feel more comfortable in answering these questions honestly and so my work does not become biased by my own opinions.

The discussion will be recorded for the assignment however will later be destroyed once transcribed.

I am predicting the discussion will take 90 minutes and request that [REDACTED] considers the time needed for each question to ensure we capture all the information needed. For this reason, I have put suggested times for each answer but obviously there will be flexibility in this as the discussion evolves. I have left gaps after the questions for you to make notes if you so wish.

Enjoy!

Question 1 (6 minutes)

How long have you worked in early years?

Question 2 (10 minutes)

How did you feel when first coming into the early years workforce?

Question 3 (10 minutes)

Looking back how were you supported in your role?

Question 4 (10 minutes)

Do you feel your training prepared you for the role you were employed to do?

Question 5 (10 minutes)

Thinking about individuals in our current team in what ways are their professional needs different to others? (For this response I will edit out names so please speak freely)

Question 6 (10 minutes)

Can you explain why this may be? (explore why their needs may be different?)

Question 7 (10 minutes)

How can we ensure we meet all the needs of our workforce within our own setting?

Question 8 (10 minutes)

What do you see as the key challenges in meeting different needs of the workforce?

Question 9 (6 minutes)

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you feel is relevant to this study?

Appendice 9 – Transcription of Focus Group

Transcription of focus group held Tuesday 27th February 2018.

Q1. How long have you worked in Early years? (3minutes 18 secs)

I was 17 when I basically went straight from school to college, I went to my first job that was working with children, so that would be 19, I was 19 in my first job.

And you have not left it since?

No, I've always worked with children.

You were a nanny as, well, weren't you?

Yes, I did 16 months at a nursery, 10 years nannying, and then 13 years at pre-school.

Did you do your NNEB or did you do your BTEC?

NNEB.

Okay, I have worked in early years for 26 years on and off, but in my break that I took off when I was working in a completely different job, I was also nannying as well alongside it, so I kind of haven't left it but have left it if that makes sense? So, I've done private day nursery, done nannying, pre-school and school.

So what qualification did you do?

Mine was the NNEB and I did that at [REDACTED], that was a fulltime course and when you're on that course you are taught everything from how to hold the child's pencil to writing their name from the left to the right, everything was done, you were literally taught in a lesson that the child's name went in the top right hand side of the page.

Like proper school wasn't it?

Yes, proper! (laughs), and you [REDACTED]?

I've been in it since having my children really. [REDACTED] was three when I started volunteering, so what's that, 17 years ago. But I didn't do my qualification until later. I did the CACHE diploma 3, before that I was at college and then worked in an office, I always wanted to be an accountant. But I've worked in schools 1:1 and I've done like dinner ladying, and bits and pieces as well, so I've almost gone full circle. Going back in the office.

Q.2 How did you feel when first coming into the Early years workforce? (5 minutes 45 secs)

Quite scary to start with, my first job I was in charge in a baby room.

Wow your first job?

I hadn't had any experience apart from I worked for a year as a nanny, with a family, so I hadn't been in a nursery working with children and babies. So, it was quite new.

When you did your training did you have to go out into different settings?

Yes.

So, had you been into a nursery then?

I hadn't done babies in a setting.

Did they not insist that you did baby age group?

Well I did it with the family.

Oh of course.

So, I did a whole year with a family, whereas most people only do a little bit, because I did a three-year course rather than a two. But yeah it was quite scary to start with, but I worked alongside [REDACTED] and another lady who had been doing it for a little while, and I learnt a lot with them and sort of built up my confidence, and yeah, I really enjoyed it. But I always thought as soon as I was able to drive, nannying was what I wanted to do really. Yes, I think if you haven't got the support there I think it makes it a lot harder. You need someone to sort of build up your confidence and to continual learning, definitely.

When I first came obviously, my first job was at the private day nursery where I had done part of my training. So, I did the two-year NNEB and during that time I spent time in the day nursery, with a family, in a special school, in a reception class, in a nursery class, in a hospital, there was somewhere else as well I can't remember? It was a state nursery and then there was a private nursery, so two nurseries and the private nursery, I worked at when I was coming to the end of my course they basically offered me a job straight away. So I went straight to it for them and they continued my training, almost even though I had finished my NNEB and I was qualified they supported me still and I carried on working for them as a bog standard nursery nurse and then gradually sort of worked my way through and I became a senior nursery nurse and then the deputy manager and then eventually a manager with them.

So how did you feel about it when you first went in?

When I first went in to, I was excited, I was very excited, initially what I wanted to be when I left school was to be a nurse, a registered sick children's nurse, and I went and did the application at [REDACTED] children's hospital but I'm not quite brainy enough I don't think, or I wasn't back then, maybe if I did it now I may have a bit more knowledge and I may be able to do it. So I was excited to think I could still work

with children, private day nursery perhaps wasn't my first initial where I wanted to be but at the time you know when you've done two years at college, it's a job, but I was still excited to be able to work with children and enjoyed going to work each day, knowing that each day could not be the same, because no day was the same, different children, different staff, yes I really enjoyed it, it was exciting and I suppose because I progressed with them I didn't get stuck in a rut.

Yes, that's the secret isn't it.

Yes, I sort of carried on and kept enjoying it because I was offered different opportunities.

I was petrified, I thought just because of not having any real experience or most of my friends didn't have children, I was the first out of all my friends to have children, so I was like 'eek', what happens if I do something wrong? You know I was quite nervous when I first started.

Were you a nervous mum?

I don't know really, with [REDACTED] I suppose I was a bit over protective. I had no guidance from my own mother, so I was quite sort of you know muddled through it on your own, so yes when I first started I was a bit what happens if I do something wrong? what if I teach them wrong? So, yes, I was quite happy doing the washing up and stuff.

All laugh

How old were you then when you first started?

I was about, I suppose 27/28.

[REDACTED] how old were you when you first started early years, so when you left college?

I was about 19.

Yes, me to.

So that's the difference isn't it I think.

I was 20, because I had a year out from school before starting my NNEB.

So yes, I was a bit eek.

Q.3 Looking back how were you supported in your role? (10 minutes 1 second)

Okay, I think I was in a very lucky position to of been offered the job where I'd been a student, so the nursery manager, not the nursery owner, the nursery manager was amazing. I worked with her then for another 15 years after my 2 years training, I did my placement with her and then I worked with her for another 10-15 years in the day nursery with her, and she was just amazing. She supported me fully, she understood that I was newly qualified, she understood that I didn't know everything, and she understood that the things I had learned I had possibly learnt from them, so if it wasn't quite right she helped me through it. I remember her to this day, I will always remember her, she is one of the only ladies I could say that I really got a lot of working with her from, she just was amazing really, so I was really supported by her in my role. By my family, really supported again, as the same time as I left college I was getting married so I obviously I had a new husband who supported me and everything I did because you do then when your young and in love. (Laughs). My parents as of course they supported me through college financially because you know the expense, yes so yeah, I had quite good support all round really in work and at home, so I was very lucky, so yeah.

Do you think you would have coped with it, without the support?

Financially no, because it's expensive and I had to get to, obviously we lived in [REDACTED] and I had to get to, the course wasn't held in [REDACTED] so I had to drive to [REDACTED] every day. So financially, no I would not have managed without the support of my family at all. And also, I suppose the nursery, the nursery manager, because even though I was a student they gave me a little bit of holiday work and paid me to do holiday work which again supported me financially through it. That would have been the biggest thing, and without [REDACTED] help the nursery manager perhaps I wouldn't have stayed in childcare as long, I don't know because she supported me so well and gave me the opportunity to try for all these other options while working within one sort of business.

It makes a difference like you say.

Yeah, so I was very lucky, I had a very nice start to my career, a very nice start to my career, like I say it hasn't always gone smoothly, but it was a nice start.

What about you [REDACTED]

Well, my first job I can't actually remember having much support really, obviously from people I was working with in the actual room, they were brilliant. I didn't really see a lot of the manager, and I don't even remember going on courses, but that's not to say I didn't, I just can't remember.

But back then I don't think there was as many training courses offered, because there was the early years development team but there was no such thing as sort of following the EYFS or anything really then was there? You did your own planning, you did your own stuff, there was nothing that you had to follow, it wasn't as paper based back then.

So, no, I didn't kind of, like I say most of my support was from the people I worked with in the room itself and they were brilliant because they were new parents themselves, so they kind of sort of gave me lots of tips and bits and pieces. Then obviously my second job, nannying I was at home on my own all day, but I used to take them out to mother and toddlers and things like that and sort of meet up with other families.

Did you have young children then, as well?

Not to start with, no. No, but I had my two, I kind of timed it quite well because she'd, they had just got to school age, the older one so I wasn't needed as many hours and stuff, so I used to take them with me when they were little, so that kind of worked well. So, I was quite lucky, the family were lovely, they were very good, she was a nurse, you know she worked in a hospital, so but yeah, I suppose I got my support from other nannies and people.

Were you part of a nanny, because they have now these childminding loops, these nanny loops. Like Ofsted recommend now that you have a childminding buddy, so did you have like a nanny buddy?

Yes, there was a girl, who nannied but it was us that sort of got together ourselves there were no groups, we just went to mothers and toddlers and there was another lady.

And you chatted.

Yeah, we chatted and were quite good friends. Yes, but there were a lot of people in the village in fact some of them are across at middle school, some of the parents, teachers and assistants and stuff. But I think the most support I have ever had is from [REDACTED] when I first started at pre-school, she was amazing, she's the one that put me in for forest school, she obviously saw something there that I obviously didn't.

I think some people do just naturally see it in you, especially if you've been, what's the word I'm looking for? Squashed into a position and some people can naturally see that you have got that talent, but it just needs eeking out a bit.

Teasing out.

Yes, that's the word teasing it out.

Because I remember at the time there was quite a few others that wanted to do the forest school, but she was like nope.

No, you are the right person and I've only known you, how many years? You are the right person.

You are Bear Grylls.

All laugh

Then obviously I went into school then and that, I think that's why I stayed so long where we are now.

So, did you work, you just did forest school in school?

Yeah, but I used to be in charge, I used to have the whole 32 children sometimes with a TA, so I only have them for about 8 weeks, so each class was very differently run as well, so that was quite challenging, but it sorts of helped me with everything I do now I suppose. It's all about those experiences.

Everything you do in childcare I think is a step up a ladder and a learning curve even when you get to where we are now in a management team, whatever you do you find there's something you can learn from.

Your, always learning aren't you.

Well yeah of course you are, when you think you've done 17 years, 19 years, 26 years, but again you can always learn something new from the people you're working with.

So how about you [REDACTED]

Well I kind of, obviously once I'd finished volunteering a job came up and it was [REDACTED] actually who employed me, because I had no qualification in childcare at all, nothing so again she must of seen something in me and recommended I do my level 2 so I was like, 'oh I don't know about that', but she kind of gave me a bit of a nudge to do it, and then that's when I started understanding a bit more of what I was actually doing I think. She was supportive for my level 2 but any further than that it was like a head against a brick wall, I kind of felt like quite squashed there was kind of like no, I couldn't go anywhere else. Because an incident was that came up about you had to have an early years teacher or professional status and someone else was put forward for it because they had a degree, and I kept saying I have actually got a degree, you know I'm not stupid, I have you know, just because it's not early years I have actually got a degree and it was kind of ignored and this person couldn't do it because it was the wrong kind of degree and even she said well what about [REDACTED] and it was like 'No', and then she left so. So, I kind of felt a bit side stepped really, on it all because I was ready at that point had been a good 12 months, 18 months since I had finished my level 2 so it wasn't like I had just.

Yes, so you'd got experience.

Yes, I was starting to build experience up then, I was more confident so yes, I kind of felt that I was like a bit squished and that knocks your confidence.

You start doubting yourself don't you then after that.

And after that it slowly went downhill.

*Q.4 Do you feel your training prepared you for the role you were employed to do?
(10 minutes 28 seconds)*

Okay, I was already working so for me it really helped because it made sense for what I was doing so it kind of answered my, why are we doing that? why have we always got to have play doh out? You know, why have we got to do that a certain way and for me it started answering all that, all those little questions.

Yes, I could see that.

And I was like oh that's why we do that, and it started to make a lot more sense for me. I think particularly when I won my battle to do my level three it answered a lot more. But yeah for me initially sort of going in I think because I differ from you two, I'd already started working without the qualification it was you know, you do go in quite blind and you're like why am I doing this for? I get I'm playing with them but why am I playing with them? you know, why have we got to fill in these little colours on the planning?

Yes, I think you see that sometimes in the people that don't work in childcare, when you say you work in childcare they say oh you just play. No there's a little more to it than just play.

Well that's kind of I suppose where, naively that's how I was, you know that's what I thought you did all day, you know I didn't.

That's what a lot of parents think, don't they?

Yes, I didn't think that you know all the washing up you had to do, and you had to do paperwork, you know behind the scenes, and what's an observation? I was like what you writing that for? You know I was very naïve, so for me the training was invaluable, and I have been quite lucky particularly with [REDACTED] although she wouldn't sort of put me forward for the bigger training, we were very lucky in all the little training that we did.

Yes, we did lots.

We did lots, you know we did signalong, the behaviour management, there was always something, you know wasn't there or discussion groups, there was always something to do and forwards, you know and if you had questions she would try and answer them, because I did I was very much a why are we doing that for? why? I was quite a yeah, so for me definitely it helped.

Yeah of course, you know when you do the NNEB they sort of teach you even the most, just playing with sand, you know even those really silly things that you kind of think, expect people to actually know.

Yes, when you went to college and you'd come home from college and people would say what have you done today, and you'd say, "I've played with the sand." Laughs

Yes, they even taught you the play value, observing children, every tiny little aspect of everything you do in childcare they do for you at college so that was a huge help. And then obviously the training as well alongside it, yeah, I think that helps, it kind of

you know it's all very well reading about these things in college and stuff but going out and actually doing it yourself that's the bit that.

Yes, so the on practice-based learning was really.

Yes, so they sort of did every side of it really, differing for everybody's ability. And then it also helps you with your own children itself, doesn't it and having your own children kind of gives you an even different better perspective. Because when your sort of training on working children you have this idea in your head on what it's going to be like from the parent's point of view, but actually it's nothing like when you're a parent.

No in fact the lady I worked with, my manager in the day nursery when I had Josh, said to me your be asked when you go in what's your occupation, do not tell them you're a nursery nurse, she said do not tell them you're a nursery nurse because they will leave you to it, but your baby is new born and we look after them from 3 months and that's a big gap in development that you and it's true, I didn't tell her I said I was a stayed at home mum, because I thought I'm not going to tell them because it is a big gap isn't it? So, I can understand what you're saying there that its being a parent to be a preschool or a nursery worker is very different.

Yes, but when I was nannying that kind of you see I had them from 4 months old, sort of quite tiny and it kind of, I had that confidence then when I had my own. So, I just wanted to get out of hospital myself. (Laughs) 6 hours later I was gone.

So, you felt it did prepare you for your journey?

Yes, but I think you can't, when you're at college your kind of only take so much in as you sort of more you work with them you sort of learning all the time aren't you? You know you're always sort of faced with a different challenge even now, still. You always get something different thrown at you, don't you?

So yes, again doing the NNEB really prepared me because you do go into it as a young sort of teenager thinking you know 'Oh I can do this it's working with children', but actually when you get there the practical based learning works alongside the teaching and learning that you get in college. It really does work and it brings it all together, it really does because your being taught in college how to do an observation on a child and why you're doing an observation on a child and when you get in to do it practically you're going, "that's the reason why I'm doing the observation on the child", so it all marries it all in together, so yeah I think the training does prepare you for that. Also, with doing the NNEB I did placements, so practical placements in hospital, in home, in day nursey, in school and I got a wide variety of what you can go into once you are qualified, so when you've finished your training you can go well 'yeah, I can go work here, here or here'. So, when I finished my initial thought was I didn't want to be a nanny because I found that quite lonely and I'm not a sort of person who can be on my own I like to be around other people. So, I knew straight away that I would be silly looking for a nannying job, although I went on and did nannying further on in my career, but I got more confidence then I suppose so it helps you find where you want to go with your career.

So how did you feel when you are on your nanny placement did you get on well with your nanny placement? Because I wonder whether that has an influence?

Yes, I think that possibly is what it was, I don't know whether I was, yes, the lady who was the mum, I didn't actually see the dad that often, it was always the mum, but I always felt, well I rightly so I was a student do you know what I mean? But I always felt that if ever I did something and she thought it, she just butted in, so for example if I was feeding the baby and it wasn't quite how she would do it she would be there going, 'oh no, no sit up a bit more, do this a bit more, do that a bit more' and I found that a bit, and I was like this nannying larks not for me.

Yeah you see I had the most amazing experience.

Yes, so the different experiences help you build up. I had a really wonderful placement in a school-based reception class and that was over at [REDACTED] and the lady I worked with was beautiful, she was lovely she was so caring, so understanding and taught me loads and then the hospital I did working on a ward with a nursery nurse who helped nurses and I also worked in the play therapy centre.

Oh, that would be wonderful.

So, I did both in the hospital. Play therapy no I couldn't have done that, because you just couldn't structure your day, you didn't know what was going to come next, because you might be playing with this little one once and then the next day they are in special care, so you can't play with them. So that's quite heart breaking so I couldn't do that one, umm I don't think, you know life's change you might change your mind a bit more.

One of my placements was in this, it was all children who were in social services, well it was a social services nursery it was, that was quite, because you knew every single child there was sort of protected, yes that was quite a tough one.

So, to me it sounds like the NNEB you had a lot more placements and a lot more experience of the wider childcare.

Yes, and you had to do a certain amount of hours with each placement and if you didn't do those hours at the end of your course you had to go back and remake them up, and you had to have a certain number of hours in college as well. But even things like when you're in college, like you say, they are teaching you to play with the sand, but they were teaching you how to hold the pen, where to write their name, the clear, so you could read the child name and the child could read their name. Just you know, we had textiles lessons to show you how to make children's clothes, cooking, how to bath a baby that was all practical and was done in the lesson as well, alongside what the text books were teaching you, the teaching and learning plus the practical based work and I don't see that in any courses now.

I can tell you, you don't get any of that in the level 2 or level 3, it's all theory.

It was an amazing course.

Yes, it was an amazing course.

Q.5 Thinking about individuals within our current team in what ways are their professional needs different to others?

Q.6 Can you explain why this may be? (11 minutes 25 seconds)

Now I've just done, part of my HR course there was something I found called the millennial employees, I've since done a bit more research and there are lot of different things that over the years that they call certain groups. And you can see [REDACTED] in it, I've printed it all off so if you want to look at it it's really interesting and it's how they learn. Their work life and home life balance is better than ours, they will demand that they will want to leave on time, if they don't leave on time, 'why am I not leaving on time?' You can see straight away its [REDACTED]. You know and there's nothing wrong with that, that's just how there, you know there also more insecure when they first come in, because they basically, what this said was, they have had their hand held right from early years, right the way through school and then all of a sudden there left to go, so then they go 'what do I do now?' So, then what they are expecting from an employer, to go right now I need you to do this, I need you to do that, I need you to, because they are used to having their hand held. Now if you look at [REDACTED] for instance, you give him one instruction he will go and do it, you give him several and he can't. Now that's because he's a millennial employee and they can't cope with it.

I see that in my own son.

It's a similar thing, they can't cope with it. It is so interesting and as soon as I did it I was like, 'so that's why they act like that'. It's not them, its society.

To contradict though, I would like to see a course like the NNEB put out for youngsters like that because it is, you're talking that way, that you are expected to, does that make sense? So, that would be a really nice, well, it's obviously too big to do but it would be a really nice experiment to see how, because you are, you have got those certain hours that you have to do doing this and doing that and doing the next thing whereas I know just by watching other people train...

It's like half hearted.

Yes, it does feel like it's half-hearted doesn't it, and you think god I worked harder for mine. Laughs

Yes, but it's just the way they have been brought right through school age and they've had somebody there all the time, so the workforce can't cope with that, just go and get on with it, you have to tell them. You know obviously as years go by they get better at it but that initial start.

Yes, because if you look at [REDACTED], alongside [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and yes she's very much, but she's got little bits of old school sneaking back and she just automatically uses her common sense and her initiative to go on and do something, and when you say, 'oh we need to sweep the floor', she doesn't just sweep the floor, she sweeps it, dustpans it and puts the tables back. You say to maybe [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] you know sweep the floor, you wouldn't necessarily almost get it swept up and the tables put

away, so you can see parts of [REDACTED] as her millennial but there's almost that kick charge of actually no, if I'm doing that I've got to finish the job.

I think because we are almost a similar age that's how we were brought up, you start a job you finish it.

But then is that not us being, running our own homes?

Yes, I think so as well.

Because when your running your own home, your kind of suddenly think you know what needs to be done, so you kind of put that into practice.

Yes and no, I think I was a bit like that when I was younger though as well, you know if something needed, like at work when I first started in an office I would stay that extra sort of you know 10 minutes to finish the job, that's the difference.

Yes, I suppose when I worked in the pub again if my shift finished at 3pm but there was still something that needed doing I would actually say 'I will just finish this and then I will go', and sometimes I would be late fetching my own child from school because I'd gone out my way to support. Whereas you just think, actually like you said, 'got to go on time', they go on time and I've worked with youngsters in the pub as well again, and it seems very much the same, 'well I've got my hair at 4pm I've got to go', and I think 'oh actually I've got to pick my son up at half past three I think that's more important than your hair' but that's the way.

And it's the way their brought up.

Yeah and its society in its whole I think, we are a very self-centred society these days, but then when we look at, they tell us not to trust anybody because of security, so you don't trust the person down the road because actually the security, so the whole world is a bit like that isn't it at the minute?

Yes, it's very different.

Then if you look at someone like [REDACTED] and she is very old school.

Yes, old school, almost the other way.

She's completely the opposite, it's like you sit down and you do as your told type learner. You know you will do it, and she gets quite frustrated when they don't do it first time.

Or they answer back, or what she sees as answering back but actually they're questioning why you want them to do it in a certain way.

Yes exactly. I have that with my son and my husband. (Laughs).

But that's just that generation.

It's really interesting you sort of see the different, I suppose I can see it more because I sit back a bit and you see the differences in each group.

See [REDACTED] I find can be a little bit more mature but also, she can do things for herself a little bit more, but then again, you know she's had a different upbringing. [REDACTED] has been brought up by mum and dad who have done things for him, [REDACTED] had a different upbringing, so I do think our home life effects our working life and it does make a difference on how we portray ourselves in our working environment, I think it really does.

Yes, because if you look at [REDACTED], he's younger than [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Yes, but he can just get on and do stuff.

You never have to say, do you?

No, he gets on and does stuff, so I think it does yeah, it is different isn't it your, but I think we are very lucky in that they work with a team of people who have a wide variety of experiences, hopefully when they move on they will take that with them.

I think that, I would definitely say that both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have improved.

Oh yes definitely.

From when both of them first came.

Yes, well their confidence has grown, but also their ability to ask questions.

And deal with situations.

Yes, deal with situations that occur, yes definitely.

Have we covered question 6 there as well then?

Kind of question 6, you know I suppose we could explain in more detail?

Well we've explained why their needs are different.

Yes, we have because we have said about the families.

A lot of it is family, I would say.

And training, the older staff have had more training than the younger ones and different training.

And I think sometimes when we look at the training we get now, we have to make sure we put them on the right courses, because if they are just going to go to a course where they are going to be lectured at their not going to get anything from that are they? If they are going to go to a course where they get some practical experience in that, they're get more from that than maybe we would?

I think for certainly someone like [REDACTED] I would say with his dyslexia he needs that visual and he needs that one instruction at a time and for him to go on a course like the Cache level 3 it is just very much throwing this information at you.

He would have done very well on the NNEB, actually.

He would have been amazing on that.

It would have been the best course for him because he would have had a lot of practical experience, a lot of teaching experience and a lot of support because your tutors came out to visit you, quite a lot actually, didn't they?

So, if you look at [REDACTED] how you know she's doing hers but she's very much a doer again isn't she? She's of that different generation.

Like [REDACTED]

They get on with it, they don't moan about it, they just do it. And [REDACTED] is very much like that as well isn't she, she will just get on and do it.

Although again I think [REDACTED] would have valued experience of other settings, I think that's what [REDACTED] could have gained a bit of support from.

But it certainly has an impact on your upbringing as well.

And family life in general.

And if they have got the support at home, if they have not got the support at home and their being told at home, 'well yeah that's okay that's a job but it's not a long term goal is it that job?', you need to be looking for other things', then they are always going to look at it as this is just a stop gap, so actually I don't need to put in 110% into it. But if they are looking at it as, if you know this is what I want to do, this is my career, I want to do this, then I want to go on and be a senior manager and I want to go on and do this, then eventually I want to own my own nursery, then they're outlook of it is going to be different isn't it? , and if they are getting the support at home, going yeah, work at it, work at it, work at it, then they do. Well my niece actually, so she's 25, so she's kind of a millennial employee, she's on the border.

Yes, she's kind of, I can't remember what it's called but there's another one above that?

So she did her Cache level 3 and she really enjoyed it and she's gone on and she's done her early years degree and she's doing now her top up, but in that time she's worked in a day nursery, she's worked for a family and now she's set up her own business as a childminder and her business is thriving because they have completely converted part of their home into a childminders area. So, she's got that kind of old school, but she's got that drive to go on and do and she wants to, and she's got the support of her family to do that. So, I think that makes a huge, huge difference.

See [REDACTED] the same, she's got that drive, thinking about our newest employee she's got that, and she is sort of, you know that middle generation. Because she's what 29 so she has got that.

To get things done.

Yeah, sometimes she needs reigning back a little bit (laughs)

But that's because she goes at top speed.

Q.7 How can we ensure we meet all the needs of our workforce within our own setting? (7 minutes 52 seconds)

I think we do a very good job, providing for all our workforce because we have got a variety of age groups, yes I think we could possibly improve but I think we are very lucky that we have got someone like [REDACTED] as a HR who can listen to everybody, and it doesn't seem to bog you down at all, you just seem to get on with it.

I hide it well.

So, I think we are very lucky to have someone like you, not a lot of settings have HR support like that, so I think we are very lucky to start with.

Like you say, its finding out what the needs are of each person, because everyone's is very different.

And everybody brings something unique don't they.

It is hard like I say, I think that's the importance of the supervisions though isn't it? because that's when your finding, making sure.

Communication, that is key to everything, because if you don't talk to people you don't know what's missing, what's needed.

Yes, exactly and I think on a whole, we talk well together as a group within the room, within lunch breaks, within the office, and what have you as a whole. Yes, we miss people because actually we are not all there all the time which is why though the staff meetings are so vitally important, and we get to discuss things there. It's why committee meetings are important and you having the staff representative on their because they can take things back, because at the end of the day why should it always be the manager who has to remember the smaller details, it's not.

You can't it's impossible.

Exactly and like you said, supervisions.

I think the mentoring has worked really well, from an outsider view, you two probably don't see it so much as your both mentors, but for me I see the difference in those 3 staff.

See sometimes I think, 'oh have I done enough as mentoring', but I think at the end of the day though it's also just talking to who your mentoring and giving them that conversation and they are taking that in.

But they have also got a point to go to, so if they have an issue or if they are not sure about something and you know they don't want to sound like an idiot to another staff member, they have then got that rapport with you guys to then go, ' I'm really not sure about that, can you just', you know.

But then we are very lucky that we've got you as a HR manager to come to and say right, how am I going to answer this question? and I think, as a setting in itself to have four managers with the experience we have all got I just think it's amazing.

It is unusual.

Yes, it is unusual, but I think it also takes the pressure off everybody individually. Yes, there's pressure on everybody at certain times, there's bound to be. You know what I mean, like there's pressure on you to make sure afterschool club is running, there's pressure on me to make sure my IPM's are up to date, there's pressure on you to make sure the funding is done, [REDACTED] is everything else, so there are our own individual pressures, but I think we are very lucky to have each other to support each other.

I think you know the management meetings I think are really good because save waiting weeks and weeks before you can catch everybody you have got that focus to go right okay, 'we need to discuss this'.

Yes definitely.

'This is an issue, or this is really positive, you know, can we discuss this?'.

Yeah because a fine example of that is the incident that we had recently at after school club and [REDACTED] wasn't here, but we sorted it all out between us didn't we and spoke to each other and decided what we were going to do and how we were going to proceed with it, and then we did it all didn't we, we supported her and there was a good outcome, wasn't it?

And then also it's not all then resting on your shoulders you're not the one who's worrying about it constantly because you know there are three other heads having a think about it for you, and you might be the one at the end of the day who is dealing with it but we can come and give you that support and you know, get that half a day at home to go and write that report, so somebody else can cover your shift for you and that helps all of us. With regards to the youngsters I think they, that the fact that they get their mentoring, the fact that they get their supervisions, and they get their appraisals, they get a lot of support.

I think they get a lot of support, you know if anybody comes to me and wants a specific course for example I always look into it.

Yes, they know they can ask for courses, they know they can ask for training, they know they can ask for support.

Yeah you know we have just supported [REDACTED], with her level 3, [REDACTED] when he did his forest school.

[REDACTED] when she did the ECAT, you know we give them all the support.

I mean there are so many opportunities, and you know the signalong.

And even just simple things like doing the safeguarding and things, if you've got an experienced person to go with it doesn't make it as daunting, as safeguarding's quite a scary thing to do and if you've got someone who's done it or going on along with you it's.

Well you want to get it right don't you?

It's quite a big thing to you know, if you don't get it right.

But again, they are very lucky in the fact that if the youngsters, if they see something they are not sure about they can always come and ask, and then we can come and ask, and you know there's always someone there to give you.

'What do you think about this, I'm really not sure?' I get quite often a couple of staff come to me and say I'm really not sure, so I'm like 'okay let's just record it' and then if we need to we will take it further.

And then I think the knock-on effect of us having that management meeting when we bring it all up then, supports them in their initial decision and why they made that decision.

So, I think, we do meet the needs of everybody really.

It makes you feel valued and that's the key thing, in the setting, because the moment a person does not feel valued that's when you've lost them.

Yeah, I think your right.

And then you don't get the best out of them.

No, you don't.

And I think that they all know actually again that we are all only human, and there's so much we can do, and we still are learning off them as well, you know as much as they are learning off us, we are learning off them.

Well I'm still learning on my HR course, I'm still picking bits up and saying, 'oh that's how you do it', and that's how I learned about the millennials.

And I think we meet the needs, but we are very prepared that there is always more that we can do.

Yes, we are not complacent. We don't sit back and go 'oh yeah we have done everything we can'. We kind of go well 'what if we try that or what if we do that'. So yeah, I agree with that.

Q.8 What do you see as the key challenges in meeting different needs of the workforce?

(5 minutes 32 seconds)

I would say, space.

Yes, so we've just obviously in question 7 answered a few of the challenges but yes, space having the space to speak privately, we do as best we can in the building we've got and time because actually we run 7.30am to 6pm everyday with children, there's never a time when we don't have children in the building and if we haven't got a child particularly with us at that time we are getting ready for the next one to come, or you know, so time is a big, big thing I think.

Especially for those who just do pre-school because they're not sort of doing after, like you say your sort of looking after the ones while the others go across to school so in a normal nursery that would finish at 3pm that's the time you would of kind of had your chats.

Yes, you could sit around the table together and have half an hour chat each week sort of thing, but you just don't get that time, but you couldn't be without everything we offer so that is something that will just.

But that's why our meetings once a term and the 1:1's that's why they are so vital.

See that's the area I feel is my challenge I suppose from a HR point of view is that I don't see some of the ones from after school club, because I'm not there, so sometimes I wonder do they realise I am there and I would stay behind if they wanted to talk to me, you know it's just making sure.

Yeah but I think that's where Teresa has got a fantastic rapport with all of her staff in after school club, they all know that they can go to her should they have any issues.

No, because I would then sort of say, if they said something to me I know so I always action every single thing that they've just said to me and that I will pass it on to you, well you know I will pass it on to you don't you, and then we work together don't we?

And they know you've got Heather to pass it onto so that it can be evolved into a bigger discussion and you can support them in other ways if need be. So Yeah.

Yeah, we are, I would just say our biggest challenge is the building.

Yeah, it's the building and the time, because I think all staff are prepared to listen and all staff are prepared to come and ask for advice, I don't think there's any, maybe not now, I don't know, I don't think there's anybody at the minute who isn't prepared to come and talk to us and as a whole I think that's the way we have been. There has been something obviously in the last week or two that has occurred, but nobody saw that coming that was a bolt out the blue. If anybody had asked anybody you would have said everybody was happy in their employment, I totally believe that. There was nothing, nothing to say that that was lingering under the carpet, it was just a bolt out the blue.

It is a juggling game though isn't it, trying to keep everybody happy and when you got well everybody's got all these different personal problems and you've got to juggle that with you know the professional needs, but I think that's what makes us good, because we have got all that experience, we you know a lot of us have been through things so we can go yeah, yeah, I understand that try this.

And also, again it comes down to the support of your team. Because you know I feel I think I would find it hard doing the deputy manager role without the support of like you four, having a little one in reception class, because you know I sometimes worry 'oh what if his poorly what if his this what if that', but just for example that other Wednesday when he fell and cracked his head, everybody just rallied round to cover and I could leave the building and I've worked in places where that couldn't happen and you would be like you can't go and I would have to ring my mum and say 'can you come and get', and then you feel like, that's when your home life suffers.

Yeah, then you've got that guilt then so actually you're not becoming a particularly good, you wouldn't become very good at your job in that afternoon because you'd be worrying.

Yes, you'd be worrying, and your guilt is there thinking I should be at home so should I be working should I be at home, so you then question yourself which then a knock-on effect to the people you're working with.

I think we meet the challenges pretty well, if I'm honest, really, like we said we have had meetings in the cars before now. (Laughs)

And this lovely office that we come to here, which is just so lovely and warm by this aga.

All laugh

But you know there's always, but we can get around it.

Oh yes of course we can, and I think because we are so adaptable that's how we get around it and we understand that we have all got, you know, when you look at the wide variety of team and everybody's got something different to their life, we do, I think we do a pretty damn good job.

And me.

Q.9 Is there anything else we have not discussed that you feel is relevant to this study; 'What are the professional development needs of a changing early years workforce'

(4 minutes 27 seconds)

I think we can only do what we do, in the way that we do it by having someone pulling from the top to support everybody and I think we have got that within [REDACTED], as our leader. She does support us all and gives 110% and more to the preschool, to her staff and I think you know coming from a setting that had no support, no leadership, I really see that's what makes [REDACTED] what is it and that's what helps us to you know develop and achieve in the ever changing workforce, because we see that it is a changing workforce and it's never the same and each day is different and because we see that we can do it.

Yes each staff member is different and we can support them I mean both me and [REDACTED] will know we came from a very horrible negative situation where you know, I don't know about you [REDACTED]? but I was told I was useless on a daily basis, you know and it has an effect on your confidence, it knocks you down doesn't it?

It was awful, especially when you kind of go from a very good setting from a very good leader to then suddenly having a very bad leader, because you know how it could be and then you go to one where it really isn't very good at all.

And you have a lot of self-doubt and then you don't want to come to work so then when you are work your then miserable and the children pick up on it and then the children play up and their behaviour changes, so I would 100% agree you have got to have that strong leadership at the top and I would say that [REDACTED], is definitely the right person, you know she drags us all kicking and screaming sometimes, you know 'you will do it'.

But also, she does it in a way that we don't always know that we are doing it. She gives you that confidence to do stuff, and you kind of go, 'oh I've just done that how did I do that?' Yeah and she does it so well, so well.

I wouldn't have thought I would have had the confidence to do what I do now, you know when I first started doing the wages I was like 'oh no suppose I get it wrong', you know, now I just like its second nature, I just get on and do it.

But that's how it should be isn't it.

That's only from [REDACTED] giving me that boost and going 'you can'.

I think if you've definitely got the right leadership pulling that ship along you're going to float and sail away and do everything that you should be doing, basically.

Yeah, but sometimes it takes a while to kind of weed out the ones that are kind of holding you back.

Chuck them over board.

All laugh

Well as long as the rest of the staff are supportive and what have you, that person will just alienate themselves eventually and they will be gone as they won't like it because it will be too much of an enjoyable place to work.

And that's the thing, it does all filter down, so sort of you know it goes from [REDACTED], to our level of the managers, and then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again, so the staff pick up on that, morale gets better and then you get the best out of them. They want to give more, they want to train more, so it's all of it really isn't it.

Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

Focus group finished.

Appendice 10 - Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this questionnaire. Please answer as honestly as you can.

1) How many years have you worked in Early years?

0-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15 – 30 years

2) Which qualification did you complete on entry into the early years workforce?

NVQ	Cache Diploma	Apprenticeship	NNEB	Other

Section 1 – Please answer each statement.

Qualification and continuous professional development	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My training supported me for the role I was employed to do.					
I value regular in-house and external training.					
I am aware of the progression routes available to further my studies in early childhood, education and care.					
I am aware of the different career paths in the early years sector.					
I would like to specialise in a specific area of childhood, education and care.					

Section 2 – Please answer each statement.

Perception of the role of the Early years practitioner	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Society values the contribution of early years practitioners to children's educational development.					
Parents and guardians value the contribution of early years practitioners to children's educational development.					
I am proud to tell people what I do for my occupation.					
My family supports me in my role.					
I make a positive difference to children and families in my care.					

Section 3 – Using a scale of 1-7 please rank the below qualities of an early year’s practitioner in order of importance (with 1 being the most important).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communication							
Creativity							
Intuition							
Knowledge							
Love							
Reflective							
Understanding							

Section 4 – Using a scale of 1-6 please rank the below in order of what motivates you in your role as an early year’s practitioner. (1 = the most important)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Financial reward						
Career progression						
Learning new skills.						
Recognition from colleagues						
Recognition from other professionals						
Supporting children and families						

Section 5 – Ethics of Research

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

On completion please return to [REDACTED] in the envelope provided.

Questionnaires received after Wednesday 21st March will unfortunately not be used for this research project.

I would be most grateful if you could complete the below questions in regard to the ethics of my research.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
1) I feel this research has been carried out ethically.		
2) I would be happy to be approached by the researcher to gain a better understanding of some of my responses.		
If you have answered 'agree' to question 2 please print your name in the box provided.		

Many Thanks.

[REDACTED]

Appendice 11- Literature Review Readings and Priority Grid

Rating	Reference	Why?
1 HIGH	<p>Department for Education (2012) Foundations for quality: The independent review of early education and childcare qualifications – Nutbrown Review. [online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175463/Nutbrown-Review.pdf</p> <p>Accessed 27 January 2018</p>	Relevant as UK government document dated 2012 – have we seen progress? Have we now new challenges as history unveils changes in society and needs?
2 HIGH	<p>Department for Education (2017) Early years workforce strategy Policy document</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy</p>	Very relevant due to published date of 2017. Impacting practice currently.
3 HIGH	<p>Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. & Taggart, B. (2004). <i>The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from pre-school to end of key stage 1</i>. Nottingham, United Kingdom: Department for Education and Skill. [Online]</p> <p>Available at; http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3155&context=sspapers Accessed [12th January 2018]</p>	Longitudinal study – dated 2004 – Highly recognised – 6-year study using a variety of research methods. Is this the start of recognition for Early years? This study has been referred to in the above two readings.
4 HIGH	<p>Rose, J. and Rogers, S. (2012) <i>The Role of the Adult in Early Years Settings</i>. Open University Press. [online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780335242313 Accessed 10th January 2018</p>	Dated 2012 – recognises role of early years professional as complex and multi-dimensional which positions with what I experience on a day to day basis.
5 MED	<p>Dorothy Faulkner & Elizabeth A. Coates (2013) <i>Early childhood policy and practice in England: twenty years of change</i>, <i>International Journal of Early Years Education</i>. 21:2-3, 244-263. Routledge [Online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09669760.2013.832945?need_Access=true Accessed: [15th January 2018]</p>	More about government agenda and how this impacts practice.
6 MED	<p>Department for Education (2017) Melhuish, E. and Gardiner, J. Study of Early Education and Development (SEED). Study of Quality of Early Year's Provision in England. Research Report. [Online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665077/SEED_Quality_Report_December_2017.pdf Accessed [22 January 2018]</p>	UK based longitudinal study. All data. Reads quite impersonal.

Rating	Reference	Why?
7 HIGH	<p>Professional association for childcare and early years (2016) <i>Towards an Early Years' Workforce development strategy for England</i> [Online]</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/workforce-development-policy-briefing-jan16.pdf</p> <p>Accessed [14 January 2018]</p>	<p>Refers to other readings.</p> <p>Useful for research on CPD.</p>
8 MED	<p>The British Association for Early Childhood Education. (2016).</p> <p>Journal Early Education no 78 Spring 2016. [online]</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/EE_Journal_Spring%2016%20ONLINE.pdf</p> <p>Accessed 27 January 2018</p>	<p>My Study will be based on England alone however this journal has instigated thought on how each part of the UK have different statutory requirements – could be confusing? Maybe we should work together to pool resources and expertise to meet sector challenges?</p>
9 LOW	<p>Oberhuemer, P. (2013) Continuing Professional Development and the Early Years Workforce. <i>Early Years: An international Research Journal</i>. Routledge. Taylor and Francis. [Online]</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2013.793483?needAccess=true</p> <p>Accessed [27 January 2018]</p>	<p>Call for papers for more research on CPD and how this looks around the world.</p>
10 HIGH	<p>Taggart, G. (2015) Sustaining Care: Cultivating mindful practice in Early Years Professional Development. <i>Early Years</i> 35:4, 381-393. [Online]</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2015.1105200?needAccess=true</p> <p>Accessed [12 February 2018]</p>	<p>Rated as High as I agree with much of what's written. Is a small-scale study but a relevant one.</p>
11 MED	<p>Georgeson, J. and Campbell-Barr, V. (2014) Attitudes and the early years workforce, <i>Early Years</i>, 34:3, 322-332, Routledge. Taylor and Francis [Online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2015.1111688?needAccess=true</p> <p>Accessed [24 January 2018]</p>	<p>A study using students and teachers in a University regarding attitudes of the early years workforce. Small scale yet very interesting and relevant to other readings.</p>

Rating	Reference	Why?
12 HIGH	<p>Sanner-Stiehr, E and Vandermause, R.K. (2017) Can't We All Just Get Along? A Dual-Theory Approach to Understanding and Managing the Multigenerational Workplace</p> <p>Journal of Organizational Psychology. Vol. 17, Issue. 2. [Online]</p> <p>Available at: https://search-proquest-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/docview/1927102084/fulltextPDF/7B344027DADF4812PQ/1?accountid=15133</p> <p>Accessed: [26 January 2018]</p>	<p>This is relevant, recent research explaining the challenges and possible solutions to successfully lead a workforce made up from different generations.</p>

How has the role of the Early years workforce changed?	SOURCE 1
REFERENCE	Rose, J. and Rogers, S. (2012) <i>The Role of the Adult in Early Years Settings</i> . Open University Press. [online] Available at: https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780335242313 Accessed 10 th January 2018
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	Introduces concept of 'plural practitioner', recognising the role as complex and multi-dimensional. Suggest practitioners should view their role in terms of who they are not what they do.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	Suggests our practical actions are informed by our decision making, 'ultimately driven by our personal system of beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes 'professional knowledge' page 18.
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	Recognises 7 selves of the practitioner – critical reflector, carer, communicator, facilitator, observer, assessor and creator. Acknowledges we need to adopt a perspective alert to potential impact of on-going change. Profound changes impacting our role can be within families, society and a global scale, linking to the work of Bronfenbrenner. History is continually evolving i.e. 30 hrs, child obesity crisis, 2-year provision, graduate led workforce etc. Speaks of 'intuitive' theories derived from a practitioner's personal beliefs.
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	Links to my work on module 2503 recognising leadership as a relational activity with a complexity of relationships. Some days we feel like we have just been 'herding' children and others we are overwhelmed with the learning taking place – the seven selves make sense to me, we have to think on our feet as to what is needed at that time. Personal interpretations help make sense of experiences – I agree we all perceive things differently, this is why group communities of practice help us to understand different viewpoints.
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	Identifies the roles ever changing through history. The role of practitioner is complex and multi-dimensional.
WHAT COMPARISONS/ CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	This work links to my 2503 work, and how our autobiographical lens (Brookfield) is formed from our values, beliefs and experiences. My challenge which forms my research question of how I meet the needs of a team of different needs, born from their differing values and beliefs – all fits!

How has the role of the Early years workforce changed?	SOURCE 2
REFERENCE	Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. & Taggart, B. (2004). <i>The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from pre-school to end of key stage 1</i> . Nottingham, United Kingdom: Department for Education and Skill. [Online] Available at; http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3155&context=sspapers Accessed [12 th January 2018]
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	European longitudinal study investigating the impact of pre-school education. Results demonstrated that high quality provision impacts positively on children's intellectual and social/behavioural development.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	'Curriculum knowledge is just as important in the early years as it is at any later stage of education' p5. Is this the turning point from a 'playgroup' to an early year setting and a childcare assistant to an early year's practitioner? Recognising the importance of what we do.
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	Well acknowledged study. Thorough robust study using a variety of methods. Took 6 years. States staff with higher qualifications rate higher quality scores. Recommendations were; Ensure staff have both curriculum knowledge as well as knowledge and understanding of child development. Improve the child development content of both initial and continuing professional development courses. Has this been addressed?
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	Last year's work addressed the complex matter of what does quality look like? How do we define or measure this? The report states higher qualifications = better quality but I argue that there are many other aspects to quality that may have impacted data. My own journey has demonstrated to me infrastructure (structural features) can also impact quality. If we have the correct infrastructure around us we can utilise skills more effectively on the floor with the children. – linking to my practice with the new business support role.
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	Recognises knowledge of child development and curriculum generally poor in early years. It acknowledges the importance of early years and empowers the sector to stand up and be counted amongst teachers.
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	The EPPE study mirrored many findings from other studies and research around the world. Results and recommendations were acted upon at local and national level.

How has the role of the Early years workforce changed?	SOURCE 3
REFERENCE	<p>Dorothy Faulkner & Elizabeth A. Coates (2013) <i>Early childhood policy and practice in England: twenty years of change</i>, <i>International Journal of Early Years Education</i>. 21:2-3, 244-263. Routledge [Online] Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09669760.2013.832945?needAccess=true Accessed: [15th January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>Historical perspective on childcare policy change and impact on practice. Recognises new skills needed for the 21st century with the legal requirement for interagency working through the Children's Act 2004.</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>'This has led to significant re-examination and redefinition of the roles and status of early years professionals as well as of the qualifications framework that underpins the profession' p9.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Historical perspective more about government agendas – no real evidence of how the 'role' has changed. John Patten – secretary of state for education in 1993 Controversially proposed a one-year course aimed at training mature non-graduates to teach nursery and infant classes using their experience as mothers.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>I do agree the role has changed and expectations are much higher. We have moved from 'playgroups' to early years settings. From assistants to educators.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>Recognises the professionalism of the workforce as gradual. Accurate documentation of government agenda.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Supports findings of EPPE project recognising this evidence as robust. I still believe John Patten's 'attitude' about the role of early years practitioners is visible in society today. In fairness to him many mothers, myself included did fall into the profession as volunteers etc. However, the role has significantly changed as have the demands of running a business with more legal requirements to adhere to. This is an area I would like to further research to see if society's attitude to the role of an early year's practitioner has changed or are we still back in the 90's?</p>

Do Current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?	SOURCE 1
REFERENCE	<p>Department for Education (2017) Early years workforce strategy Policy document [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy Accessed [22 January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>Strategy to support early years sector to grow and deliver high quality provision. Recognises qualifications do not prepare people for the job in hand.</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>‘I believe that if we want our children to have the best experience in their earliest and most formative years, we must invest in and value those who are shaping their early development’ Dineage, C (2017)</p> <p>‘We want the early years to be a career of choice and for careers advice to reflect the diversity of roles available’</p> <p>‘The quality of training is not consistent, resulting in some staff being unable to perform the role they are certificated to deliver’</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Recommendations will impact current practice. Recognises there are barriers to recruiting, developing and retaining practitioners.</p> <p>Level 2 qualifications – the government do not set criteria for this. – training therefore may not give the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil role. Too many qualifications it is difficult to understand.</p> <p>Recognises the early years does not have a good reputation for offering good career progression or varied career opportunities.</p> <p>Recognises quality of training is inconsistent.</p> <p>Suggests a diverse early year’s workforce, which better reflects wider society, helps to enhance children’s experiences</p> <p>CPD - Many local authorities have stopped offering free CPD to early years settings. The strategy promises to address this through free on-line training.</p> <p>The provision of quality improvement support across the country is variable. Some local authorities continue to provide free support whereas others charge for their services. There is also variability in the type and level of support offered to settings rated good or outstanding given that local authorities are not required to support them.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>Recognises multi agency working and the importance of being able to communicate with this wide audience. I agree – you have to wear a different ‘hat’ throughout the day, adjusting your demeanour to the issue in hand i.e. sympathiser, motivator, carer, leader, etc.</p>

	<p>Early years teacher status – the strategy recognises the importance of pedagogical leadership however then states a EYTS can work to a ratio of 1:13. This exasperates me, children in the early years need constant guidance, reassurance, care routines, to support their development. No matter how qualified a person is they cannot and should not work to this ratio and expect to meet the needs of the child, this importantly includes safeguarding.</p> <p>I do not have any idea of what I could go on and do after my degree, other than a teacher. I perceive that some of my associates outside of the early years sector are expecting I will get a ‘proper’ job.</p> <p>I support the suggestion that training is inconsistent. My experience of level 3 was a frustrating experience and a tick in the box activity. I genuinely felt it was money making for the provider and I did not matter to them, I was just a number.</p> <p>Gender diversity in the workforce is an interesting subject – are we as society not being contradictory? At a time where we are encouraging male role models into the workforce yet at the same time moving towards a gender-neutral society for our children? Should it not be about the skills and ‘attitudes’ of the workforce rather than the biological status?</p> <p>This also links to the ever-changing role we play in early years, it’s almost as if the government foresee a male early year’s workforce can help fill the gap left by estranged fathers. Our role becoming more complex and expectations growing. I have a friend who works in the 3rd most deprived area of the country, her school are now looking to take babies as they do not believe the parents are equipped to care for them themselves. Where will this end?</p> <p>CPD – I have experienced the impact of funding cuts on training opportunities for my team. This has encouraged me to partner up with similar settings to support each other which on a positive note is providing a mutual respect and a wider community of practice. Lack of support from the local authority has had a negative impact on our relationship with them and alternative training providers are being sought, creating new jobs within the sector.</p> <p>Support from local authority – Good rated settings don’t warrant support from local authority. The workforce strategy states, ‘The quality of early years provision in England is impressive with 91% of settings rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding in 2016’. Does this then mean the local authorities are only supporting 9% of early years settings?</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	This is the governments promises to the sector, addressing current issues and addressing these. This will impact my practice.
WHAT COMPARISONS/ CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Suggests that settings with higher qualified staff are more likely to obtain a good or outstanding rating from Ofsted. I would argue that Ofsted’s view on quality may be different to the practitioner, parent or child lens.</p> <p>It recognises the importance of getting the workforce strategy right, time will tell.</p>

Do Current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?	SOURCE 2
REFERENCE	Professional association for childcare and early years (2016) <i>Towards an Early Years' Workforce development strategy for England</i> [Online] Available at: https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/workforce-development-policy-briefing-jan16.pdf Accessed [14 January 2018]
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	Documents concerns over the sustainability of the early years workforce. Government are driving forward plans for the sector such as 30hrs, but evidence shows that practitioners are severely under strain and uncertain of their future.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	CPD refers to 'regular ongoing opportunities for people already working in a sector to update or enhance their skills.' P.6.
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Training gives 'confidence' which has a positive impact on the children's experience.</p> <p>Identifies barriers to CPD being lack of time, money and support.</p> <p>Training need to be on-going, targeted and linked to actual practice.</p> <p>US study found that practitioner quality is complex, and that there is no simple relationship between staff level of education, quality within setting or children's learning outcomes. It's not about the qualification but the ability to create a high quality pedagogic environment.</p> <p>Graduates only spent a minority of their time (35%) working hands-on with children, and this tended to be with 3-and 4-year-olds rather than younger children, a phenomenon that continues to be the case in many group settings.</p> <p>The sector has yet to address how to make the most of its talented non-graduate staff. How to develop their skills and support them to grow in their chosen area of expertise.</p> <p>Better link needed between CPD and career progression. No requirement to commit – like other sectors.</p> <p>Recognises 3 core components to provide the highest quality care and education for children and families; 1 – Practitioner commitment to CPD 2- Access to CPD 3- Commitment to CPD being recognised by qualification and pay. Need to bridge the gap between early years and older children by recognition – pay – career progression etc.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	Links nicely to CPD recommendations; Commitment needed and recognition in the sector. Recognises this is tricky and confirms my experience that support is needed.

	<p>I think the workforce requirements and support haven't kept up with the professionalism of early years – the move from playgroup to Early years setting. I did my degree to keep up – 19-year-old level 3 coming in straight from college.</p> <p>I question; How do we support practitioners to develop in area of expertise when I don't even though the career path to take after degree – I have no clue! Will I be financially better off from degree – I don't think so! Similarly, the report identifies the power of mentoring, but I ask who mentors the mentors? A positive way forward would be to invest in the more experienced team to enable them to mentor the less experienced team.</p> <p>I agree that CPD is more important than the original qualification as this is linked to your current practice, however it is important to experience a variety of settings to get a wider perspective.</p> <p>I agree that quality cannot be directly linked to qualification there are far more elements to consider. Leadership must be considered, and the ethos of the setting. The mix of the team as we all influence each other. It is a complex role made up of a complex web of relationships. This leads me back to the importance of 'attitudes' of the workforce.</p> <p>I recognise the suggestion that graduate workforce spend 35% of time with children. I have improved this recently by scaffolding the management team with a business support co-ordinator to drive forward the business model allowing me to spend time on the floor with the children and staff.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>Links to my other readings of The Nutbrown report, and Workforce strategy and the EPPE project.</p> <p>A well-respected association in the early years sector.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>There is evidence that better trained and qualified childcare professionals are more confident and provide better outcomes for children – and that high-quality settings are more sustainable over time. This is a recognised pattern from all my readings.</p> <p>Identifies the day to day struggles of the sector with lack of funding and opportunities as highlighted in the Workforce strategy.</p>

Do Current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?	SOURCE 3
REFERENCE	<p>Department for Education (2012) Foundations for quality: The independent review of early education and childcare qualifications – Nutbrown Review. [online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175463/Nutbrown-Review.pdf</p> <p>Accessed 27 January 2018</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	In 2012 there was a government review of early education and childcare qualifications.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	4 visions for early childhood education and care, one of them being; 'Early years staff have a strong professional identity, take pride in their work, and are recognised and valued by parents, other professionals and society as a whole'
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Recognises level 3 qualifications need to be strengthened with good knowledge of child development including speech development and the importance of play. Also, how to work with families. By 2015 70% should be level 3 qualified</p> <p>3.16 – Talks about student experience varying – tutors lack of early years knowledge, experience and knowledge of changes in the sector. Talks of mentor – supporting new practitioners link theory to practice and supporting more experienced practitioners – giving time to reflect. In call for evidence – 56% participants said the range of qualifications did not meet the needs of the current workforce including new entrants. Talks of learning from other settings.</p> <p>States early years workforce do not have the status they deserve.</p> <p>Point 4.8 gives an example of labelling practitioners by their level rather than role.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>Nutbrown states she finds it worryingly that an unqualified practitioner can move to lead a setting without being anywhere else. She's saying what should be in a course 60% child development 0-7 year – DID THIS HAPPEN?</p> <p>Are we valued by society? I predict only by other early years professionals.</p> <p>Nutbrown recognises importance of working with families and knowledge of child development. Linking to how the role is widening.</p> <p>Point 4.8 – I have been guilty of this and recognise how this can be belittling to the practitioner but also have a negative impact on the lower qualified staff – it's not all about the qualification but the CPD. My thinking now evolves to proposing that a level 3 qualification could incorporate proof of CPD, maybe in</p>

	<p>a portfolio? I have a member of the team currently studying for a level 3 and feeling very disinterested with it all as feels it is a tick in the box exercise and about money for the training provider. Completing a level 3 qualification may not be the answer until the qualification itself is improved. Instead we could build up a portfolio to include documentation of training attended but also reflections, professional discussions etc. This has excited me to consider in my own practice for my own team. Early years Portfolio. I refer to point 4.36;</p> <p>The best professional development uses a blended approach including high quality materials, work-based learning and support, visits to other settings, experiences which challenge thinking, attending conferences, and provision of mentoring from outstanding leaders and peers.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>It's a government document. It effects day to day practice. This is similar to the reading I have already looked at however I liked point 1.7 which states; 'The biggest influence on the quality of early education and care is its workforce. Those who engage with children, supporting their learning and interaction with their environment through play, can affect their wellbeing, development and achievements' Wellbeing for me is of vital importance in the current society and children living in poverty and the number of vulnerable children in our care.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>5.3 section – talks of licensing – worries how this would be monitored and quality assured. Potential costs may mean lower paid practitioners can't access CPD. Links to my thoughts.</p>

Do Current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?	SOURCE 4
REFERENCE	<p>Department for Education (2017) Melhuish, E. and Gardiner, J. Study of Early Education and Development (SEED). Study of Quality of Early Year's Provision in England. Research Report. [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665077/SEED_Quality_Report_December_2017.pdf Accessed [22 January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>This report considers the finding from the recent SEED study originally published 2015. Considers provision quality and what this looks like along with the impact of early years on children's outcomes and value for money of funded two-year olds. I am interested in the above section – Quality of Early Year's Provision in England.</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>Data - The frequency of CPD ranged from 1 to 24 times per year, frequency of staff supervision ranged from annually to weekly. Eighty-seven percent of settings had a training plan in place, 56% per cent of settings did not have a training budget. There are a greater proportion of poor quality settings (i.e. inadequate, minimal, and adequate) in the EPPE study than in the SEED study. This is the case for both ECERS-R (a measure of quality) and ECERS-E (a measure which focuses on the educational aspects of experience) measures. This indicates that the overall quality in ECEC settings in England as assessed by these measures has improved from the time of EPPE to the time of SEED.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>% of managers with a degree rose from 43% to 66% since the EPPE study to this study.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>Degree qualified managers - This is a good statistic however this seems not a significant increase if we consider the time period is 18 years. Or maybe it is?</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>It's a major longitudinal study of English provision. This reading is more suited to the CPD question I have rather than the training.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Another characteristic that has been associated with better quality provision is higher staff-child ratios, therefore my point made regarding EYTS and a ratio of 1:13 has some support. (Early Years Workforce Strategy 2017).</p>

Do Current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?	SOURCE 5
REFERENCE	<p>The British Association for Early Childhood Education. (2016). Journal Early Education no 78 Spring 2016. [online] Available at: https://early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/EE_Journal_Spring%2016%20ONLINE.pdf</p> <p>Accessed 27 January 2018</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	Addresses how four nations were facing common challenges in relation to early childhood education. This article focuses on four speakers about the realisation that more needs to be done to support development and career progression.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	'What we see depends on the lens we are looking through, and this in turn influences our interpretations' Elizabeth Wood. P.15.
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>All four articles agree a well-trained workforce is the most important determinant in quality.</p> <p>Wales - Currently, there is "no uniform requirement for the ECEC workforce in Wales in terms of either qualifications, or ratios of staff to children"</p> <p>Northern Ireland –Need to upskill practitioners to gain the best out of play-based curriculum – building on preschool experience and teaching. They want a graduate workforce but can't say how.</p> <p>Scotland - Big emphasis on workforce and their importance. Implied connection between qualification and children's outcomes is poorly evidenced. Some evidence of leadership qualification but not how highly qualified practitioners affect child outcomes long term. Poverty crisis in Scotland – needs to be factored in. Suggests a 'blended workforce'. Wendy DUNLOP.</p> <p>ENGLAND</p> <p>Talk of structural and process features of quality which rely on professional knowledge of practitioners.</p> <p>Considers reliability of assessments in EYFS. The EYFS has different lens. Practitioners are expected to agree upon what is a "good" level of development, and to make a judgement to create accountability to Ofsted, to parents and to society. Reliability of those measures can be questioned when we consider the different values and beliefs of the individual practitioner. What we see depends on the lens we are looking through, we can all make own interpretations. We need to also consider the values and beliefs of the setting.</p> <p>Practitioners may draw on different forms of knowledge to make those assessments, and the implications this has for "reliability."</p> <p>Different levels of training, qualifications and professional knowledge bring additional variations into the assessment processes.</p>

	Need time to reflect – see this as more important than ‘training’
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	The England section agrees with what I am thinking - our values and beliefs affect how we see assessment – My ‘niggle’ was finding a child development program to support the gap in knowledge but realising needs were different – diverse – One course does not fit all – It needs to be more of a mentoring process unique to the standpoint and needs of the individual practitioner, it’s about having time to reflect. I have tried to implicate this by having professional discussions in the setting regarding many aspects but particularly individual children and their progress.
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	It’s real – relevant to what is happening now. Identifying challenges to the sector.
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>The UK as a whole, are sending the same message that a well-trained workforce impacts quality. However, there are many barriers to this.</p> <p>Elizabeth Woods contribution (England perspective) Links to the work of Rose and Rogers (2012) who speak of how our values and beliefs give us a ‘intuitive’ theory on child development. This also links to my work in module 2503 and the power of reflection and how everyone’s journey is different.</p> <p>Maybe CPD is the answer – on-going learning from reflection which is targeted, and specific to practice (Pacey 2016)</p>

How do Early years practitioners best engage in continuous professional development?	SOURCE 1
REFERENCE	<p>Oberhuemer, P. (2013) Continuing Professional Development and the Early Years Workforce. Early Years: An international Research Journal. Routledge. Taylor and Francis. [Online]</p> <p>Available at: https://www.tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2013.793483?needAccess=true Accessed [27 January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>Recognises the need for 'sustained professional development', however argues there is little reform to effectively understand what it looks like, how it is implemented etc. Compares other countries.</p> <p>'Call for papers'</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>Australian input - Identified a need for active engagement where 'professional learning stimulates a deeper understanding of their own values, beliefs and experiences'.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Although my study is based on England I read with interest the Australian input who speak of the 'professional isolation' sometimes experienced by lead teachers.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>States</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - CPD should be an entitlement. 2 – CPD should promote active engagement and critical reflection. 3 – CPD needs to be viewed within a wider system perspective to include policy makers.
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>It considers and contrasts different countries.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Again, a link about reflection – pointing to CPD more important than original qualification?</p>

How do Early years practitioners best engage in continuous professional development?	SOURCE 2
REFERENCE	<p>Taggart, G. (2015) Sustaining Care: Cultivating mindful practice in Early Years Professional Development. Early Years 35:4, 381-393. [Online] Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2015.1105200?needAccess=true Accessed [12 February 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	Proposes experiential training focusing on the 'professional self' through mindfulness to support the 'attunement' needed and 'emotional labour', recognising practitioners can experience 'burnout' from the exhaustion experienced from working with very young children all the time.
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>'Practitioners may listen more deeply to each other as a consequence, but also enjoy the emotional labour of 'tuning in' to the needs of children'. P.390. In reference to being in the moment.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Argues disconnection of the official discourse of 'professionalism' and that of the moral roots of professionalism – attunement and emotional labour. Training is not considering the 'practitioner themselves' and what they bring.</p> <p>Professional identity can be contrasting – on one angle the carer on the other the assessor for example we need to understand 'attachment theory' however do not need to display this key disposition of awareness of the capacity to care.</p> <p>Emotional cost – Being 'emotionally available' being fully present. Knowing when to just be and when to step in – a respectful synchrony.</p> <p>Talks of government proposal to reduce ratios leading to widespread unprecedented reaction – practitioners arguing children need 'secure attachments, continuity and care'</p> <p>'Getting ready for' thinking – practitioners/parents always thinking of the next thing, transition or next skill to be learned. – this causes anxiety and can be counter-productive – becoming a negative cycle and weakening child attunement. By introducing mindfulness techniques practitioners may be better equipped to be in the moment.</p> <p>Compassion should be a central aspect of a settings purpose not just an individual attribute.</p> <p>Slow and mindful interactions promote self-awareness which improves communication.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>I agree, you cannot help but feel the 'duty of care' to those in your setting and their wider families. It is a relational occupation, can be very emotive and consuming. School has approached me about mindfulness coaching for team, recognising this.</p> <p>I connect with the argument that practitioners are always thinking ahead to the next transition – this really portrays my practice at the moment, and anxiety levels. We visit school for lunch and it's a rush to get there, a rush while we are there and a highly</p>

	<p>stressed activity. I think I need to consider the benefits and disadvantages to this part of our day.</p> <p>As leader it is difficult to not be thinking ahead. I compare myself to my deputy who is far more relaxed, and I do believe this has better outcomes for the children, maybe mindfulness is the answer? The ability to 'park' ideas and enjoy the moment.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>Author delivers a graduate program. Completed a study through introducing a module on mindfulness.</p> <p>Small scale evaluative study. More research needed.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Links to Rise and Rogers – the 'seven selves'.</p> <p>Again, CPD could facilitate this personal growth?</p> <p>Links to module 2503 – I hope to use this reading for the theoretical perspective.</p>

How do Early years practitioners best engage in continuous professional development?	SOURCE 3
REFERENCE	<p>Georgeson, J. and Campbell-Barr, V. (2014) Attitudes and the early years workforce, <i>Early Years</i>, 34:3, 322-332, Routledge. Taylor and Francis [Online] Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/09575146.2015.1111688? needAccess=true</p> <p>Accessed [24 January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>Links to previous readings about importance of Practitioner as 'self'. Being self-aware of how values and beliefs influence our judgements.</p> <p>Study comparing staff and students in higher education regarding their perceptions of what 'attitudes' needed to work with young children.</p> <p>This was a call for papers across the globe – I will just consider England.</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>'Early years work requires both stability-within-self, promoted by an awareness of one's own disposition and personal epistemology, and the capacity to respond flexibly to the changing needs/wishes/emotions of others.' P.11.</p> <p>Educational leaders need to help individuals look into themselves, to stand back from the demands of everyday life and reflect upon how current circumstances and problems provide new insights into who they are. (Bottery 2004) cited in Georgeson and Campbell-Barr. (2014). P330.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Speaks of 'passion' for the role and the risk of assuming practitioners who find themselves in this role have certain dispositions inherently. Also, in a profession where we are measured on performance, dispositions and attitudes are difficult to measure and could be discounted.</p> <p>More notice should be given to 'practical wisdom' and dispositional understanding – aspects that don't lend well to assessment, evaluation or investigation.</p> <p>Early years work requires stability in oneself, self-awareness and ability to respond flexibly to the changing wishes, needs and emotions of others.</p> <p>Everyday practice helps build knowledge of oneself and context.</p>
DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>This is a vocation I argue you cannot effectively work in this role if you do not have compassion and are able to relate to others, both adults and children.</p> <p>I support the point that we are continually learning through day to day interactions, no day is the same and different challenges present. 'Intuition' plays a key part when working 'in the moment'.</p> <p>Experiences make us who we are.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>Papers called as interest in workforce development.</p> <p>Competencies in training can be defined as a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes. This paper considers the practitioner.</p>

WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>Refers to Taggart's paper on, mindfulness.</p> <p>Links to needing time to reflect and learn about oneself. My reading has a similar theme to my journey when creating my research question – I started off wanting to create a factual structured training module and then identified I should be promoting reflection and identifying the individual needs of the team, which I now believe to be more about their well-being and emotional resilience in order to provide the 'safe, supportive' environment children can blossom in.</p>
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How can I as a leader recognise and meet the needs of the team?	SOURCE 1
REFERENCE	<p>Sanner-Stiehr, E and Vandermause, R.K. (2017) Can't We All Just Get Along? A Dual-Theory Approach to Understanding and Managing the Multigenerational Workplace Journal of Organizational Psychology. Vol. 17, Issue. 2. [Online] Available at: https://search-proquest-com.proxy.worc.ac.uk/docview/1927102084/fulltextPDF/7B344027DADF4812PQ/1?accountid=15133 Accessed: [26 January 2018]</p>
HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO MY RESEARCH?	<p>Recognises the advantages and challenges to a generational diverse workforce. Generational differences impacted by wider ecological model i.e. societal changes, age, and social placement relative to each other. Propose familiarisation of employee and workplace, and mentoring can promote effective intergenerational communication.</p>
IS THERE A QUOTE I CAN USE? Page number.	<p>'collective experiences of members of a group within a designated span of birth years (generation) shape value sets and attitudes' p.104.</p> <p>'Millennials have come of age with a sophisticated relationship with technology, giving them an undeniable edge in an era when almost every workplace is technology-dependent.' P105.</p> <p>'Employers must understand the values of each generation and focus on building effective communication patterns among employees of all ages to ensure mutual understanding, respect, and effective intergenerational communication' p109.</p>
WHY IS IT USEFUL?	<p>Positives = Unique perspectives, and complimentary skills. Negatives – lack of relatability and resentment.</p> <p>In current workforce – Baby boomers, generation x and millennials. Boomers – fighting premature retirement Gen Xers – feel undervalued Millennials – battling allegations of entitlement. This causes resentment and an environment of 'them and us' in our day etc... Generation Z due to enter workforce 2020 -workforce continually changing so we must adapt as communication across generations a critical concern.</p> <p>Manheims theory – a biological group defined by place in time birth and death rates. Their individual and collective consciousness and experiences as a generation are impacted by societal events.</p> <p>Strauss and Howe, 1991 The Generations theory – generational attitudes a cyclical progression of values and behaviours.</p> <p>Each generation has tried to compensate for the shortcomings of its parent generation i.e. leading to a pattern of alternative parent styles similar to a pendulum.</p> <p>Implications for workplace – Assess the workplace for ageism, transfer of workplace knowledge and experience is crucial, facilitated through mentoring.</p>

DO I AGREE/DISAGREE	<p>This work resonates with me from my experiences of leading a workforce made of 3 generations, possibly four with plans to employ an apprentice.</p> <p>Working in Early years is a relational occupation, getting this right is important not only within the team but also when considering the multi- agency working and relationships with families. If we get this wrong this can negatively impact all stakeholders. This has wider connotations.</p> <p>This reading has been powerful and demonstrates the importance of nurturing relationships and mentoring the team.</p> <p>This also links to my other readings on values and beliefs and how these form who we are, generations are the same but collectively. I need to consider the generational differences first to then begin to understand the individual differences. However, I must be careful not to group people together.</p> <p>The generational parenting styles will also impact practice and demonstrates the importance of evolving ideas, and knowledge to embrace these. To progress our practice, we need to use all the knowledge available to us to help design our own way at the same time as being true to ourselves.</p>
WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND KEY CONTRIBUTION OF PIECE OF LITERATURE?	<p>Recognises challenges to leadership and interrelationships identifying my role is to assess the workplace and facilitate relationships.</p> <p>This concerns societal and cultural changes and how this impacts our workforce.</p>
WHAT COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS CAN BE MADE?	<p>This links well to other readings on reflective practice, I would like to research this more within my own workplace – how different are our values and attitudes in the workplace?</p> <p>I have struggled to find any further literature linking directly to generational differences in early years and feel my previous readings give me more than enough information to expand my thoughts on how to address generational differences, I will therefore conclude my literature research.</p>

Appendice 12 – Mind map – How my questioning has developed.

What are the professional development needs of a changing Early Years workforce?

How has the role of the Early Years workforce changed?

Do current childcare qualifications on entry into the sector meet the needs of the workforce?

How do Early years practitioners best engage in continuous professional development?

How do I as a leader recognise and meet the needs of the team?

Societal changes
Plural practitioner

Lack of professional identity
CPD of greater importance than initial training

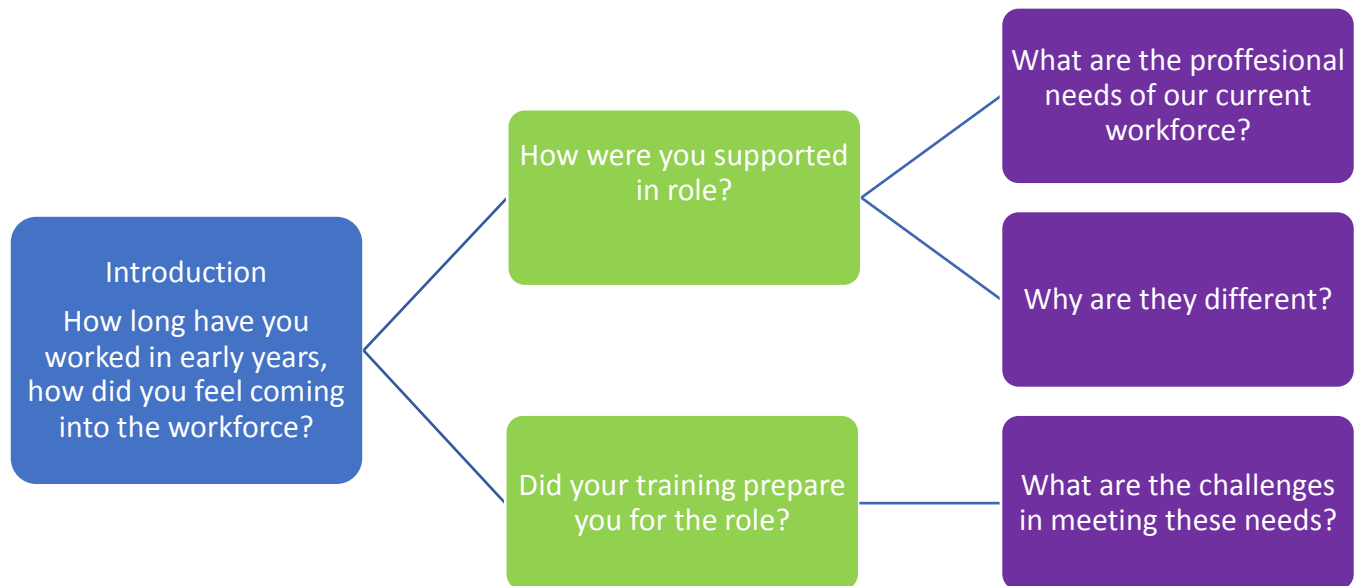
Emotional investment needed on the professional self and personal identity

Consider generational differences and different values, motivators and perceptions of the role

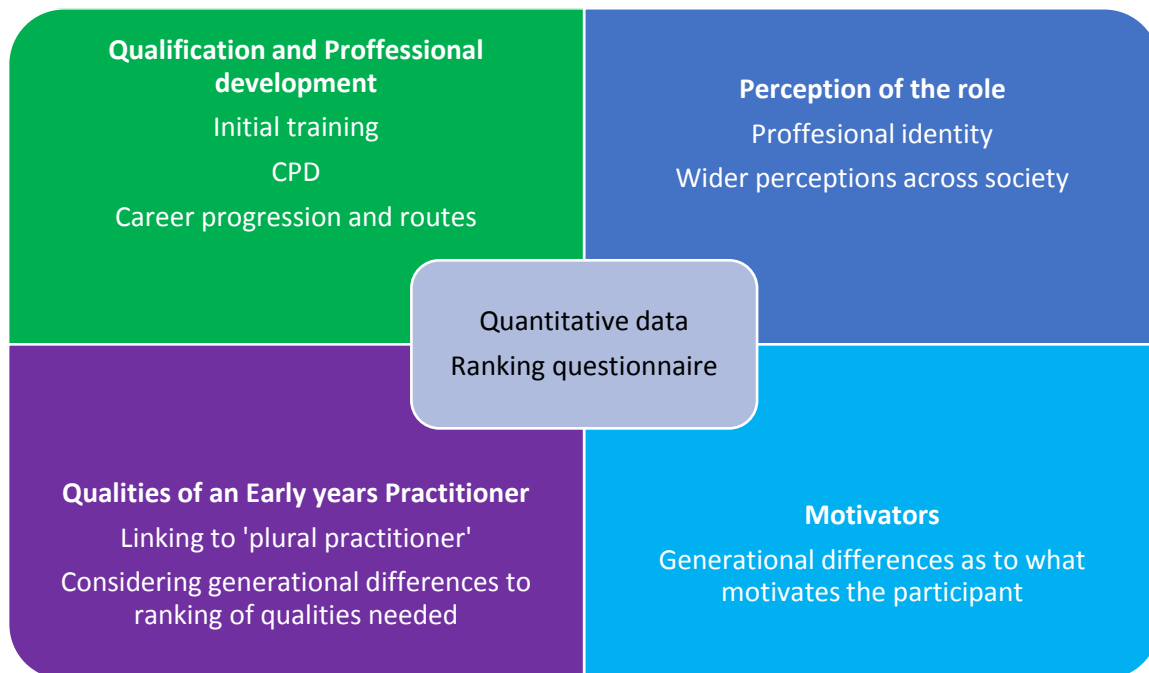
Grey boxes are questions designed to base my literature review.

The yellow boxes then identify key messages coming from the research of literature.

Focus Group Plan



Questionnaire



Appendice 13 – Summary of focus group transcription

So, having transcribed the audio recording onto paper and then listening again to the tape, I feel I am now in a good position to identify the key themes coming out of the discussion, these being;

- Support
- Training
- Opportunities
- Perception
- Leadership

I now hope to summarise the data coming out of the focus group and demonstrate how it relates to the above four headings.

Support

There were some powerful reflections on influential people throughout the participants career path, with passionate recounts of how these positive relationships have enhanced their experience of early years and for both professional and personal development. This made me think of how we (the management team) are those people who have the power to make such a difference to practitioners, how this is a privilege but also quite daunting. These people were described as beautiful, kind, caring, understanding and for seeing potential, all traits that you would hope to see in a mentor.

The mentoring system we currently have in place was recognised as a good support to practitioners, but there was some self-doubt in the abilities of the mentor, so this gives me food for thought in how I can further support my management team.

Support of the family is a theme that came up throughout the discussion, and this instigated much thought for me, as I had not considered this before. It was suggested families have a big impact on all practitioners in a number of ways, from the support they give at the start of your career as a young adult, your upbringing and how this impacts your working life through your values and beliefs, the perception your family have of the role and how this may present in their support to you i.e. do they drive you to progress or think this is a 'stop gap' job? Practitioners who have their own children may have a different perspective on childcare but also, they may need support themselves as running a young family and working can be difficult. In conclusion the role of family was seen as vital reminding me of Bronfenbrenner's work on a child's ecological system, I find myself noticing another link between what children need and that of adults.

When the discussion focused on how we as a management team support our workforce it was recognised that our workforce did have very different needs, generational differences were identified and also a change in society, suggesting that society today is somewhat self-centred. Real life experiences acknowledged how attitudes in the workplace have changed over the years and values and beliefs may differ through the generations, affecting how we complete our job roles. Although it was clear that the needs of the workforce were vast, the participants were

confident that the structure of the setting enabled us to meet these needs, we were described as adaptable and the many tools we use to manage the team were seen as a positive, i.e. meetings, mentoring, communication, supervisions and the role of the HR.

The discussion identified that support positively affects everybody, the management team were described as strong with a wealth of experiences which enables them to support the wider team in terms of teaching and learning but also their emotional wellbeing. They recognised that they are always learning, and the management meetings allow time to nurture this reflective learning environment through working together. The rapport between management and other members of the team was seen as a positive aspect, the participants agreeing that to feel valued in the workplace was key to everything.

Training

The introductory and transition questions in the focus group considered the participants training experiences and it was evident that the NNEB had left lasting positive memories, participants went into detail about this training and the value to this, recognising the importance of practice-based learning and how this 'marries' together the class based learning and practical elements. They described the subject matter which including bathing, cooking, textiles in addition to child development, skills that the participants found useful in their own experiences as a parent. The variety of placements gave practitioners a good idea on a range of careers they could aim for and a chance to experience these first hand, the participants felt prepared for the roles they were to undertake. In contrast the Cache diploma was described as good for answering questions as the participant was in the workplace before embarking on the training, although they had gone in 'blind' the training had given confirmation on the role they were doing.

In regard to continual professional development it was recognised by all participants that they are learning all the time on a day to day basis as situations arise. 'Little' courses were valued as allowing you to move forwards. It was felt that courses were different now and that more practical courses were needed to meet the needs of the team. It was also suggested that practitioners may benefit from visiting other settings. An interesting suggestion was that the younger members of the team described as 'millennial employees' may suit better, courses like the NNEB, as they offered structure and clear expectations, the participant suggested this to be a very useful experiment.

Opportunities

It was clear in the discussion that the access to opportunities was important for all the participants and the group had experienced both positive and negative impacts from this. One participant had been given an opportunity to train as a forest school leader and this had clearly led her to a variety of opportunities outside of the setting, building her confidence and skill set, she believes it is this experience that supports her in the management role she is now in. However, in contrast one participant felt 'side stepped', and 'squished', when not put forward for a degree. I sympathise for this participant however with my management head on I also see how difficult it can

be to ensure all the team are supported in their professional development, as you cannot give everyone the same opportunities. I recognise that this is the importance of communication and a positive relationship where you can 'tease out' the strengths of each individual and recognise the opportunities unique to them. One participant had worked her way through the setting from nursery worker to manager and described those opportunities as key to prevent her feeling stuck in a rut, she believes this is why she has remained in early years for the past 27 years, it was unanimously agreed that progression was a key driver for practitioners.

Perception

I want to include, 'perception of the role of an early year's practitioner' because this was one of the first things I picked up on when listening to the discussion. The language that the participants used included 'bog standard nursery nurse', 'I was happy doing the washing up'. 'Parents think you just 'play', then when discussing play - 'naively that's how I was... that's what I thought you did all day'. Also, when discussing training through the NNEB it was described as 'proper school'. There was also a discussion on how parents of young practitioners may not see early years as a career, 'that's a job but it's not a long-term goal, is it?'. It was also acknowledged that many practitioners who supported some of the participants early on in their careers, were parents themselves and made up much of the workforce, I wonder if this is the same now? I find this quite disappointing that society may not recognise the important job we do in early years, also that the team may not understand the progression path they could embark on, and so this is an area for further exploration.

Leadership

Leadership was recognised as the additional element, that the participants felt the study should consider. Examples were given of both good and poor leadership and the effect this can have on everybody suggesting both positive and negative experiences filter down from the top. The discussion concluded;

"And that's the thing, it does all filter down, so sort of you know it goes from [REDACTED], to our level of the managers, and then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again, so the staff pick up on that, morale gets better and then you get the best out of them. They want to give more, they want to train more, so it's all of it really isn't it?"

Summary

This focus group has been very powerful, I am very pleased with the questions and how this provoked thought backed up with real life experiences. It was recognised that the workforce had many different and varying needs and the role of the HR within the setting has been a positive impact in recognising and supporting these needs. I now recall Maslow's hierarchy of needs, something learned in school, so I am going to investigate this further to see if this links to this study at all. I also will revisit Bronfenbrenner as I have identified the importance of the practitioners wider ecological system however I need to explore if this is unique to early years as a 'caring' profession or to everybody in general. I will now have a discussion with my critical friend to try to determine the best way forward in the design of a questionnaire to the wider group of participants.

Appendice 14 – Data Reduction grid

Theme	Literature Review	Focus Group - threads
Support; Mentors Other influential people in the workplace	<p>Rose and Rodgers – acknowledge complexity of role, its more than knowledge.</p> <p>Taggart warns of emotional burnout from working in an emotive profession, recommending mindfulness as a coping strategy.</p> <p>I recognise emotional investment we must make to support practitioners.</p>	<p>Positive relationships enhancing Early Years.</p> <p>‘You need someone to build up your confidence’</p> <p>‘Well, my first job I can’t remember having much support really, obviously from people I was working with in the actual room, they were brilliant. I didn’t really see a lot of the manager, and I don’t even remember going on courses, but that’s not to say I didn’t, I just can’t remember.’</p> <p>‘perhaps I wouldn’t have stayed in childcare as long, I don’t know? because she supported me so well and gave me the opportunity to try for all these other options while working within one sort of business’</p> <p>‘she was amazing, she’s the one that put me in for forest school, she obviously saw something there that I obviously didn’t’</p> <p>‘I think the mentoring has worked really well, from an outsider view, you two probably don’t see it so much as your both mentors, but for me I see the difference in those 3 staff’.</p> <p>Traits of mentors seen as caring and understanding.</p> <p>‘the lady I worked with was beautiful, she was lovely she was so caring, so understanding and taught me loads’</p> <p>‘She supported me fully, she understood that I was newly qualified, she understood that I didn’t know everything, and she understood that the things I had learned I had possibly learnt from them, so if it wasn’t quite right she helped me through it. I remember her to this day’</p> <p>‘most of my support was from the people I worked with in the room itself and they were brilliant because they were new parents themselves, so they kind of sort of gave me lots of tips’</p> <p>‘she must have seen something in me and recommended I do my level 2, I was like, ‘oh I don’t know about that’, but she gave me a bit of a nudge to do it, and then that’s when I started understanding a bit more of what I was actually doing’</p> <p>Self-doubt in abilities of mentoring;</p> <p>‘See sometimes I think, ‘oh have I done enough as mentor?’</p>

<p>Support; Family</p>	<p>Bronfenbrenner conceptualised four ecological systems individuals interact with to help form and scaffold values and beliefs.</p> <p>Generational diversity can be challenging creating lack of relatability and resentment. Sanner – Stiehr and Vandermausse</p> <p>It's how we utilise skills i.e. aptitude for technology and practical skills. Leadership key.</p>	<p>Support of family has big impact on practitioners from your upbringing which instils values and beliefs, support in early career choices, and their perception of your role.</p> <p>'My family really supported me, as the same time as I left college I was getting married, so I had a new husband who supported me, because you do then when your young and in love. (Laughs). My parents supported me through college financially because of the expense, I had quite good support all round really in work and at home, so I was very lucky.'</p> <p>'A lot of it is family, I would say'.</p> <p>'I do think our home life effects our working life and it does make a difference on how we portray ourselves in our working environment'</p> <p>Perspective may be different if practitioner has own children.</p> <p>'Because when your training you have this idea in your head on what it's going to be like from the parent's point of view, but actually it's nothing like when you're a parent'</p> <p>'My manager in the day nursery when I had my baby, said to me your be asked when you go in what's your occupation, do not tell them you're a nursery nurse, because they will leave you to it, but your baby is new born and we look after them from 3 months and that's a big gap in development'</p> <p>'I was petrified, because of not having any real experience, most of my friends didn't have children, I was the first out of all my friends to have children, so I was like 'eek', what happens if I do something wrong?'</p> <p>Generational differences impact values and beliefs and how practitioners perform the role.</p> <p>Talking about Millennial employees;</p> <p>'there also more insecure when they first come in because they have had their hand held right from early years, right the way through school and then suddenly their left to go'.</p> <p>'it's just the way they have been brought up, right through school age, they've had somebody there all the time, so the workforce can't cope with that'</p> <p>'It's interesting you sort of see the differences, I suppose I can see it more because I sit back and can see the differences in each group'.</p> <p>'I think we are very lucky in that they work with a team of people who have a wide variety of experiences, hopefully when they move on they will take that with them'</p>
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	<p>Societal changes were acknowledged in my literature review, driven by government policy. This was not referred to during the discussion, however they did acknowledge society impacts the workforce in other ways.</p>	<p>'It's finding out what the needs are of each person because everyone's is very different. And everybody brings something unique, don't they?</p> <p>Societal changes impact attitudes in the workplace. 'it's society in its whole, we are a very self-centred society these days, but then when we look at it, they tell us not to trust anybody because of security, so you don't trust the person down the road, so the whole world is a bit like that'</p>
<p>Support; The setting</p>	<p>'Plural practitioner' identifying complexity of role and the emotional cost to the practitioner.</p> <p>This was not referred to in discussion however there was an awareness of practitioners as individuals with different personal and professional challenges.</p> <p>Morris – Champagne nurseries for lemonade funding.</p>	<p>Setting viewed as adaptable with emphasis on the many tools we use to manage the team i.e. supervision, mentoring, communication and the human resources role.</p> <p>Challenges: 'it's the building and time, because I think all staff are prepared to listen and all staff are prepared to come and ask for advice, I don't think there's anybody who isn't prepared to come and talk to us and I think that's the way we have always been'.</p> <p>'It is a juggling game though isn't it?, trying to keep everybody happy, with all these different personal problems and you've got to juggle that with the professional needs , but I think that's what makes us good, because we have got all that experience, we have been through things so we can go yeah, yeah, I understand that, try this'</p> <p>'because we are so adaptable that's how we get around it, when you look at the wide variety of team and everybody's got something different to their life, I think we do a pretty damn good job'</p> <p>'we are very lucky that we've got you as a HR manager to come to and say right, how am I going to answer this question?'</p> <p>'as a setting to have four managers with the experience we have all got I just think it's amazing' 'It is unusual' Yes, it is unusual, but I think it also takes the pressure off everybody individually'</p> <p>'that's the importance of the supervisions though isn't it? because that's when your finding, making sure'</p>

		<p>'I think we meet the needs, but we are very prepared that there is always more that we can do'</p> <p>'Yes, we are not complacent. We don't sit back and go 'oh yeah we have done everything we can'. We go well 'what if we try that or what if we do that'. So yeah, I agree with that'</p>
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Theme	Literature Review	Focus Group - threads
Training; Initial qualification	<p>EPPE Project – identified lack of developmental knowledge of practitioners.</p> <p>Nutbrown report – inconsistencies and confusion – 56% of participants stating the range of qualifications did not meet the needs of the current workforce.</p> <p>Early years workforce strategy – sporadic external support, inconsistent training, lack of professional identity and unclear progression routes threatening future of early years.</p>	<p>NNEB Qualification – positive recounts recognising the importance of practice- based learning.</p> <p>'they taught you the play value, observing children, every tiny little aspect of everything you do in childcare'</p> <p>'practical based learning works alongside the teaching and learning that you get in college, it brings it all together, your being taught in college how to do an observation on a child and why you're doing an observation on a child and when you get to do it practically you're going, "that's the reason why I'm doing the observation on the child", so it all marries it all in together'</p> <p>NNEB prepared you for when you have your own family, taught many practical skills.</p> <p>'it also helps you with your own children itself, and having your own children gives you a different, better perspective. When your training on working children, you have this idea in your head on what it's going to be like from the parent's point of view, but actually it's nothing like when you're a parent'.</p> <p>'we had textiles lessons to show you how to make children's clothes, cooking, how to bath a baby that was all practical and was done in the lesson as well, alongside what the text books were teaching you, the teaching and learning plus the practical based work, I don't see that in any courses now'.</p> <p>NNEB gave access to a variety of placements, preparing them for the role they were employed to do whilst demonstrating the many career paths students may take.</p> <p>'I spent time in a day nursery, with a family, a special school, reception class, nursey class, a hospital and a state nursery'</p> <p>'I got more confidence, it helps you find where you want to go with your career.'</p>

		<p>Cache qualification did not prepare as already in the workplace however answered many questions giving confirmation of what they were doing.</p> <p>'You know I was very naïve, so for me the training was invaluable'</p> <p>'I was like oh that's why we do that, and it started to make a lot more sense for me. I think particularly when I won my battle to do my level three it answered a lot more'</p>
<p>Training;</p> <p>Continuous professional development</p>	<p>My position evolving to advocating skills should be contextual to workplace – on-going learning from reflection, targeted and specific to practice (PACEY)</p> <p>Interpersonal skills and attitudes should not be overlooked. (Georgeson and Campbell-Barr)</p> <p>Oberhuemer – supports CPD but recognises inconsistencies in approaches to this.</p> <p>Taggart – professional identity can be contrasting.</p> <p>SEED study – frequency of CPD inconsistent ranging from 1-24 times a year.</p> <p>Barriers – time and money (PACEY)</p>	<p>Recognised the learning never stops, daily situations adding to knowledge.</p> <p>'Everything you do in childcare I think is a step up a ladder and a learning curve even when you get to where we are now in a management team, whatever you do you find there's something you can learn from'</p> <p>'you're always faced with a different challenge even now, still. You always get something different thrown at you'</p> <p>'I wouldn't have thought I would have had the confidence to do what I do now, you know when I first started doing the wages I was like 'oh no suppose I get it wrong', you know, now I just like its second nature, I just get on and do it'</p> <p>'when you think you've done 17 years, 19 years, 26 years, but again you can always learn something new from the people you're working with'</p> <p>Courses now different, more practical courses were needed to meet needs of the team.</p> <p>'we have to make sure we put them on the right courses, because if they are just going to be lectured at they are not going to get anything from that are they? If they are going to go to a course where they get some practical experience, they're get more from that, then maybe we would'</p> <p>Suggested Millennial employees may suit better structured courses such as the NNEB.</p> <p>I would like to see a course like the NNEB put out for youngsters, it would be a really nice experiment'</p>

Theme	Literature Review	Focus Group - threads
Opportunities	Unclear progression routes (EYWFS)	<p>Participants had experienced both positive and negative impact from the accessibility of opportunities.</p> <p>Talking about forest school opportunity; Then obviously I went into school then and that, I think is why I stayed so long where we are now.... I used to have the whole 32 children sometimes with a TA, so I only have them for about 8 weeks, so each class was very differently run as well so that was quite challenging, but it sorts of helped me with everything I do now I suppose. It's all about those experiences'</p> <p>'She was supportive for my level 2 but any further than that it was like a head against a brick wall, I kind of felt like quite squashed'</p> <p>Progression was a key driver for practitioners. 'It was exciting, and I suppose because I progressed with them, I didn't get stuck in a rut' 'Yes, that's the secret isn't it'</p>

Theme	Literature Review	Focus Group - threads
Perceptions; Language used in discussion	Literature portrays a bleak picture for the early years workforce – Nutbrown reports vision – to take pride in work and be valued by society a slow process.	<p>'I carried on working for them as a bog-standard nursery nurse'</p> <p>'people that don't work in childcare, when you say you work in childcare they say oh you just play. No there's a little more to it than just play' That's what a lot of parents think, don't they?</p>
Perceptions;	<p>Lack of professional identity and career progression. (EY WFS)</p> <p>Inconsistency of training and student experience – (EYWS)</p>	<p>Acknowledged parents of young practitioners may not see Early years as a career.</p> <p>'If they have not got the support at home and their being told at home, 'well yeah that's okay that's a job but it's not a long-term goal is it that job? you need to be looking for other things', then they are always going to look at it as this is just a stop gap'.</p> <p>'if they are getting the support at home, going yeah, work at it, work at it, work at it, then they do'</p> <p>Acknowledgement that one participant came into the workforce blind.</p> <p>'When I first started I was a bit, what happens if I do something wrong, what if I teach them wrong? So, yes, I was quite happy doing the washing up'</p>

		<p>'I'd already started working without the qualification, you do go in quite blind'</p> <p>'to me it sounds like doing the NNEB you had a lot more placements and a lot more experience of wider childcare'</p>
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Theme	Literature Review	Focus Group - threads
<p>Additional element the study should consider proposed by the group;</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Leadership a relational activity.</p>	<p>Examples given of good and poor leadership, recognising positive and negative experiences filter down from the top.</p> <p>'Communication, that is key to everything, because if you don't talk to people you don't know what's missing, what's needed'</p> <p>'It makes you feel valued and that's the key thing, in the setting, because the moment a person does not feel valued that's when you've lost them'</p> <p>'I think the management meetings are really good because save waiting weeks and weeks before you can catch everybody you have got that focus to go right okay, 'we need to discuss this'.... this is an issue, or this is really positive, you know, can we discuss this?'</p> <p>'With regards to the youngsters the fact that they get their mentoring, the fact that they get their supervisions, and they get their appraisals, they get a lot of support'</p> <p>'It was awful, especially when you go from a very good leader to then suddenly having a very bad leader, because you know how it could be'</p> <p>'you have a lot of self-doubt and then you don't want to come to work so then when you are work your then miserable and the children pick up on it'</p> <p>'And that's the thing, it does all filter down, it goes from the leader, to our level of managers, and then because we are all happy and in a good place it filters down again, so the staff pick up on that, morale gets better and then you get the best out of them. They want to give more, they want to train more, so it's all of it really isn't it.</p> <p>Yes, it is. Yes, it is'</p>