

Journal and Reflective Summary

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Description:

Prior to studying this unit of OORA 200, I had a very limited knowledge on Indigenous Australians. This resulted in an eagerness to learn and expand my understanding on Aboriginal culture, spirituality and beliefs. Gibbs' reflective cycle is a seminal theory in reflective practice that I have utilised to reflect upon my leaning in this unit (Gibbs, 1988).

Week one commenced with a reflection of our own strengths and beliefs in relation to Indigenous Australians. We then highlighted the differences between each which allowed me to develop an appreciation for Aboriginal people's health, wellbeing and socioeconomic circumstances.

Our second week of learning involved the exploration of Aboriginal worldview. After engaging in the "Kinship Module" (2020), I have developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for the way in which aboriginal people see the world. This topic taught me the fundamental aspects of Aboriginal people's world view and their beliefs when it comes to social behaviours and expectations which I will use within my nursing practice.

During the third week I was educated on the history of Aboriginal resilience and many historical events that occurred within the Indigenous community of Australia. I furthered my knowledge in this topic when discovering that many of these past events were triggered by government and political factors (Reynolds, 2013).

Week four encompassed the topic of the Stolen Generations and the devastating effects child removal has had on Aboriginal communities within Australia [Hogan, M. (n.d.)]. We learnt about colonisations and its impacts as well as the assimilation period, integration and the referendum.

We concluded our learning in week five with addressing discrimination and privilege, which allowed me to grasp an understanding on the role privilege and racism play in society today (McIntosh, 2012). Within this week we also discussed the term “whiteness” and its history in Australia. We were educated on meanings such as the term “privilege” as it is defined more as education, security and inclusion (Kirby, 2012).

Feelings:

Through studying this unit, and engaging in the learning material, I have gained a new appreciation for the Aboriginal people in many aspects. This includes having my eyes opened to how poorly they were treated in the past and how it is still an issue that is occurring today. Feelings I encountered during this time of learning were; disbelief, disturbance, shock, confronting and hurt. When learning about the strong Aboriginal connections and their community, as well as the kinship spirit, I felt emotions of a spark in interest and happiness. Reflective thoughts in my mind initially created curiosity but now as I am of greater knowledge on the topic, I am inspired to make a change.

Evaluation:

Within this unit, my thinking and personal morals have been challenged, particularly the way I view Aboriginal people. After discovering the amount of hatred and disrespect Indigenous Australian's suffered in the past, I feel very guilty and ashamed of my local and nationwide community for acting this way. It is very concerning that racism still occurs towards Indigenous people and their spirituality (Markwick, Ansari, Clinch & McNeil, 2019). I hope

to see in the future a furthering resolution and equality between non indigenous Australian's and Indigenous Australian's.

When reflecting upon the positives, I learnt the importance of inclusion and recognising Indigenous people in our healthcare system, society and local communities (Durey et al., 2016). This has enabled me to reflect upon my life and the ways I can appreciate and consider Indigenous Australians, particularly in my nursing practice.

Analysis:

I grew up with a very limited and basic knowledge in Aboriginal people and their culture. I was eager to engage in this unit to further my knowledge and understanding and reflect upon Aboriginal history. Through the weekly readings, learning material and forum discussions, I quickly became aware of how little I knew about Aboriginal people and felt saddened on how much information I did not know, nor was exposed to. I now believe it is of great importance that students are educated extensively in regards to our historical past and exposed to all elements of Indigenous history. This comes as a result of the importance of indigenous people and their communities needing to be recognised. This unit has allowed me to explore the essential components of Indigenous Australians and their culture. I am grateful to have the opportunity to further my knowledge and implement it into practice.

Conclusion:

This unit is an informative and inclusive platform that allows individuals to acknowledge their understanding and reflect upon the significance of Aboriginal Australia. This learning platform has enabled me to gain a more in depth understanding and appreciation for Aboriginal spirit, culture and history which is something I can apply positively to many

aspects of my life, particularly when I practice as a nurse. I hope to further my knowledge on Aboriginal people over time as this will provide me with the essential skills to relieve, encourage and assist those of Indigenous culture in my healthcare setting and community.

Action plan:

There are many aspects from this unit that I will apply to my future practice as a registered nurse. Within this unit, my understanding of Aboriginal culture and spirituality has grown as well as a new found respect for the indigenous people of Australia. This will enable me to treat and care for Aboriginal people in the best and most culturally respectable way. In addition to this, I now have a more succinct understanding on the cultural differences indigenous people portray, such as death, land and time. As a healthcare professional, this will allow me to implement cultural competence and respect when I am caring and treating Indigenous Australian's. Through studying this unit, it has educated me to not always treat each indigenous person the same as another and to not assume anything about them and their culture. I aim to pursue the traits of being respectful and aware when interacting with Aboriginal people within the health industry and in day to day life.

Appendix

Weekly posts/reflections

Tutorial one:

List 10 things that you consider strengths when reflecting on your personal life, your family, your community or social environment:

1. Organised
2. Loving
3. Determined
4. Loyal
5. Hard working
6. Supportive
7. Respectful
8. Active and healthy
9. Access to free healthcare
10. Access to safety and protection

List 10 things that you consider strengths when you reflect on Aboriginal people's lives, family, community or social environments.

1. Land connection
2. Sense of belonging
3. Artistic
4. Strong connections with family and tribes

5. Tradition
6. Passing on beliefs
7. Inclusiveness
8. Respect for elders
9. Language
10. Spirituality

b. Consider your assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs.

My upbringing and the environment I grew up in plays a major role in my values, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions. The strengths I mentioned were formed by observing behaviours of the close friends and family surrounding me whilst growing up. My assumptions are based on my knowledge of a situation. I believe I maintain positive attitudes towards most things in life and am very open minded and respectful in my values and beliefs.

2. Were the things you listed different; why/ why not?

There were a few differences between my strengths and Indigenous Australian's strengths and this was due to different ways of living, land connections and traditions. Regardless of the culture and background of the Indigenous a similarity in strengths was love and respect for family.

3. Did you find it difficult to list any strengths; why or why not?

Due to a limited knowledge on aboriginal culture I found it difficult to reflect upon their strengths however when listing mine I was able to proudly reflect upon who I am, my environment and values I hold close to me.

Tutorial two:

- b) How has your understanding of the way in which Aboriginal people see the world changed?

After reading and listening to the (Kinship Module, 2020) I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the way in which aboriginal people see the world. Gaining knowledge on the different ways aboriginal people communicate with their clan and family groups as well as the differing kinship structures and their links to inheritance highlights how much our cultures can differ. Our approach to the land, the way in which we view it and ways of managing it are very different to those of the aboriginal people. This was evident though their worldview of land being sacred, and the natural world being more important.

- b) What implications might this have in your professional, personal or educational practice?

Engaging in this module and furthering my knowledge in Aboriginal people's culture will assist in my professional practice as a nurse. I aim to implement the importance of kinship amongst my patients as well as promoting patient centred care that appropriately addresses all the cultural needs of an Aboriginal patient. I will be able to communicate to my patients, their family members and other allied health professionals who may be of aboriginal heritage with

respect and use of the correct terminology. This will allow me to create a therapeutic relationship with my patient and furthermore provide them with the best care possible.

Tutorial three:

After reading the “Aboriginal World View” and the “History of Aboriginal Resistance in Australia”, I believe that Indigenous Australian’s should be recognised as the traditional “owners” of the land and the first people of Australia. The constitution’s aim is to develop stronger and more trusting relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and as well as a mutual respect amongst all. However, as mentioned by “Closing the Gap” (2020), the gap between non-indigenous and indigenous Australians is actually growing due to statistics highlighting that initiatives like “Closing the Gap” are not working. In order to provide social justice for the indigenous people of Australia, the constitution must attend to the incomplete business of reconciliation. By restricting indigenous Australians of voicing their own opinions on Australian laws can bring upon detrimental impacts on their social and emotional wellbeing. In order to work together as a reconciled country, we must recognise and acknowledge the Indigenous Australian’s and take into consideration their sense of self-worth (About Constitutional Recognition | Australian Human Rights Commission”, 2020).

Tutorial four:

As a student nurse, I am aware that in the future I will have to work with and provide care for Aboriginal people as Australia is a multi-cultural country that contains individuals from many different backgrounds. My role as a future registered nurse is to educate myself on the traditions and values of indigenous Australian’s in order to have a greater understanding of their culture. This will enable me to ensure I am providing equality in my care as well as

safety, cultural respect and not engage in racist behaviour. Racism has the potential to negatively impact indigenous Australian's lives both emotionally and physically. Hence the importance of acknowledging that racism is a key social determinant of health and should be well understood by all healthcare providers.

I have unfortunately witnessed the effect of racism whilst on placement. This has left me wanting to implement changes in my practice to ensure that racism of indigenous Australian's is on the decline. This includes, building a trusting relationship with my patient and their family, ensuring my care is equal for all my patients and being respectful of my patient and their families emotional, cultural and spiritual needs and wellbeing.

Tutorial five:

When living amongst a privileged social group it does not necessarily mean they have access to a large amount of wealth and money, it can mean they have access to clean and safe food, water, access to education and the ability to participate in a healthy lifestyle.

Equality is something I strongly believe in so it can be quite upsetting when Australian's take their privileges for granted and begin to present selfish behaviours and actions. As a female in Australia, I have an understanding that I am privileged but am also aware that this is not in any way fair. I believe through having the privilege to study this unit, I will one day be able to give back to those who are disadvantaged in some way. I am aware of my opportunities and very grateful for them.

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