

ACRP Reflection – Adam Duffey 17764865

Prior to the start of this unit, I was not entirely sure about how I could really target disengaged Indigenous Australian students. This unit really confirmed some of my thoughts about being Indigenous Australian. Although some of those comments that were made were not specifically about the standards or course objectives, it is probably something I will remember most about this unit. Comments regarding loss of identity, and the removal of Indigenous Australians from their homes were incredibly insightful and really validated by own thoughts. The only problem was that I was learning about these ideas 20 years too late. This reflection will focus on three main points which include high expectations, identity and 8 ways pedagogy (SSI, 2017; Di Angelo, 2011; Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009). Importantly, this unit exposed students to policies like 'Closing the Gap Report (2017)'. This report specifically highlighted the areas that need drastic improvement for Indigenous Australian Education (Closing the Gap Report, 2017).

High Expectations was one of the key points from the Stronger Smarter Institute (SSI) framework (2017). Part of this unit was completing the SSI reflection module. In that module, it was found that many teachers might even say that they had high expectations of all students, but in practice they were sub-consciously framing their expectations incorrectly. The course discussed Indigenous Australian pedagogy, however whilst studying and attending lectures one of the key points I discovered was that many of these theories and pedagogical approaches would cater towards any student. I believe that is important. High Expectations are an aspect of the quality teaching framework, and all students deserve to be expected to achieve fantastic results (DEC, 2015). As a teacher, I want to be setting high standards and providing steps to allow those students to achieve those goals. I recall when I was in High School, the disconnect I felt simply because there was a specific Gifted and Talented class. At the time, I thought "does this mean I'm not gifted or talented?" This practice is going back a decade now, so hopefully it doesn't still exist in that way however even something as simple as that can cause a disconnect.

Some key points from the Di Angelo reading discussed 'White Fragility' (2011). This is a term that confronts 'white' people about their identity. Especially regarding privilege based on the colour of skin. This article heavily focuses on making white people uncomfortable, which is clever because it in a way makes white people feel how people of colour might feel regarding racial tension. My main thought from reading this article is "I can't change being white, so why are you targeting me so personally?" However, this is exactly the effect that racism has on everyone, which I believe is the clear message of the reading. In the classroom, 'White Fragility' could come in the form of teachers (not my classroom!), the community and students. Prior to this course, I have already been exposed to the ideas of white fragility. Personally, I come from an extremely multicultural home. I have family members from Indigenous Australian, Lebanese, Iranian, German and Italian heritage. It is an amazing mix of diverse ethnicity. The tricky aspect of 'White Fragility' is that many indigenous students will be white, with Indigenous Australian heritage (like me). Therefore, as a teacher you cannot become complacent when discussing these issues. I think as a white person brought up in a racist society it can be difficult to not be racist at times. I believe it is about confronting these thoughts and rationally making decisions in the right way.

8 Ways pedagogy (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009) was a new concept introduced in lectures this semester. The most obvious thing about 8 ways pedagogy was the idea that it caters for everyone. While learning a new theory, it would be natural to constantly be thinking about how it would help yourself to learn. One of the key aspects of 8 ways that I resonated with was 'Narrative' (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009). This is interesting, because when I think back to the teachers I particularly admired, I remember their stories more than the actual content. Even at this point, I cannot say I am certain on how to incorporate narrative into my lessons with ideas that are relevant. These stories that I were told were not meticulously planned, they were down-time rapport-building comments. The other aspect of 8 ways that really made sense to me was deconstruct-reconstruct (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009). I am a guitarist, and the way I teach students to learn music is by breaking down songs into manageable sections. Once you learn that small section, you go onto the next until you learn the whole song. The great thing about 8 ways is that it is just a new way of contextualising many ideas that most teachers already practice, possibly without realising it (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009). The only thing I would change with 8 ways would be to add more specific higher-order thinking practices. From my experience as a pre-service teacher, higher order thinking has been the best way to engage students. Naturally the hook of a lesson is important, but to maintain that interest I believe students need to think for themselves. The most successful lessons I have taught as a pre-service teacher have been those that really get students thinking about what they are doing. This thought process should be very obvious in the lesson plan that I have submitted as part of the assessment for this unit. Importantly, this pedagogical process helped students to achieve aitsl standards 1.4 and 2.4 (AITSL, 2011).

Overall, I really enjoyed the unit. I especially enjoyed the comments about the unit, and the thoughts that I had which just became real when somebody else said them. The statistic that scared me the most was that there are only "17 full-time Indigenous Australian teachers in New South Wales" (Gilbert, 2017). To think that I could be the 18th or 19th Indigenous Australian teacher is scary, but also exciting. The most valuable aspect of this unit was just the sheer number of ways that a single lesson can be taught. This was evident during the oyster-shell lesson. It raises the importance of really varying activities to make them enjoyable.

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