

Using reflection to improve critical care nursing skills, knowledge and patient care

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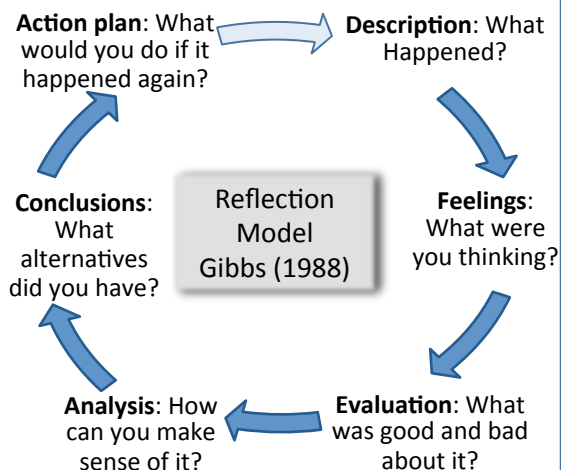


Introduction

Getting introduced to reflection methodologies in my career when attending the ITU course has undoubtedly developed my nursing and caring skills. Reflection involves thinking about and reviewing events using already acquired nursing knowledge and understanding with the purpose of learning from experience. In this poster, a review of the reflection methodology and how I applied it in practise, plus my key outcomes and learning points are described.

Method

As part of a course on intensive care nursing, two real patient case studies were used. In this poster, the focus here being on a viva voce based on a patient with respiratory pathologies leading to the development of acute respiratory syndrome (ARDS) (Wright 2014). The viva involved presenting the case study and defending the episodes of care in reference to ARDS. When reflecting in a written submission about the case, I followed the model described on the graph.



Personal experience and results

Description: I presented the scenario providing details about the patient: medical history, observations, arterial blood gas results, ventilation mode and settings. I then explained the diagnosis and pathophysiology of ARDS in detail. The examiner wanted to know more regarding the treatment and alternative actions of managing the situation.

Feeling: oral exams are stressful but dedicated preparation (reading, rehearsing, reviewing literature and speaking to colleagues) helped me to perform well; my answers were professional and underpinned with the application of nursing principles. Feeling confident allowed me to relax and enjoy what I found as a very interesting professional conversation with peers.

Evaluation: preparing the viva voce requires me effort but it is a powerful way to reflect about a scenario and do research to support my reasoning, I learnt alternative treatments and the root causes of nursing actions. I also increased my confidence in professional conversations.

Analysis: I was able to demonstrate my knowledge of evidence based practice on management of ventilator setting and providing alternative treatments. I should have demonstrate better my good preparation answering some questions deeper and more complete. As I had no experience with oral exams, I was probably cautious and not ideally managed how proactive I could have been.

Conclusion: structuring concepts, having a holistic view of the fundamentals and drilling down into the details is crucial to understand and provide the right care. The format of the exam builds a logic thinking process.
Action plan: next professional conversation, I will explain deeper the topic and correlate more factors involved. I will do research to have a better knowledge about pathology and care plan to feel confident.

When I was presented with an ARDS case in my work environment, I was able to quickly take action by setting parameters in the ventilator to control hypoxia and suggest alternative treatments, which improved the patient's respiratory status.

My own reflections around ARDS have allowed me (a)to confidently share the outcomes of my research with peers that have increased their technical skills in the topic and (b)to support them when looking after patients presenting this pathology.

Conclusions & Key Points

Reflection develops a structured framework to situations presented and provides the **ability to manage confidently critical nursing scenarios** based on evidence based practice knowledge (supported learning with extensive literature).

By reflecting, you **learn and increase your confidence**, while feeling competent to **educate other peers** and create a better professional nursing entity underpinned on professional development.

As research has validated and quantified with a positive correlation factor (Hsiang-Chu Pai, 2017, p. 287-292), my experience confirms how **nursing reflection enhances patient care and reduces anxiety in nurses.**