TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS: INDIGENOUS NURSING EDUCATION

No one race, gender or ethnic group has a monopoly on qualities of intelligence, scientific competence, imagination, empathy, tenderness, concerns for others, or motor skill ability. To state otherwise is to deny reality ….

(Christman, 1988, p.75).

Introduction

In recent years an increasing emphasis has been placed on the retention of culturally diverse nursing students in Australia (Holtz & Wilson, 1992). Historically, Schools of Nursing have enrolled small numbers of Aboriginal Nursing Students (ANS). ANS enrolled in a nursing degree usually demonstrate the prerequisites required to undertake tertiary studies to complete a nursing qualification. However, a review of one School of Nursing retention rate over a ten-year period indicates that ANS are less likely to remain enrolled and complete a nursing degree (ECU, 1998). Anecdotal reports from nurse educators indicate that many of these students appear to have difficulties adjusting to the Australian Anglo-centric teaching culture and have difficulties with usual teaching strategies employed in nursing education programs. Malcolm (1999) suggests that Aboriginal Australian culture relies on a relatively recent oral tradition. Hence, written conceptualisation and organisation of knowledge may present major challenges for Aboriginal learners. In addition, cultural differences between the students and their academic teachers may contribute to learning difficulties. To date, there is limited empirical work that documents teachers and ANS' experiences with learning. Therefore, this study sought to explore and describe the factors that enhance and inhibit the learning and teaching process of ANS from both perspectives, ANS and their teachers.

Background and Significance

Australian Aborigines, as the original inhabitants of Australia, have the longest continuous cultural history in the world. In 200 years of European settlement the population of this group of people has declined from 750,000 in 1788 to 345,00 in 1998 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1986-1997). This decline in numbers does not take into account the process of extermination of Aboriginal Australians during the first 100 years of European settlement, when the population was reduced to 70,000 (Eckermann & Dowd, 1992).

Historically, Australian Aborigines have had to adapt to enormous changes culturally, socially and economically in Australian society. This is reflected by government policy imposed on the Australian Aborigines since 1788. This includes the segregation/protection process and the stolen children generation. Each of these policy implementations involved the segregation of full blood Aboriginals from half-castes and non-Aboriginals. Inevitably this lead to poor housing, poor health and no right to education for full blood Aboriginals (Eckermann & Dowd, 1992). During the early 1950s the process of assimilation was implemented ostensibly to offer to the Aboriginal Australians the benefits of improved health, housing, education and equality through citizenship only if people relinquished their Aboriginal identity. Not until the 1967 referendum were Aboriginals granted unconditional citizenship. However, resentment, distrust and growing public anger towards society and its discriminatory behaviours became prevalent amongst Aboriginal groups (Eckermann & Dowd, 1992). Initially, integration (where Aboriginals were granted citizenship in their own
country through referendum) and then later self-determination (in which Aboriginal people were deemed capable of deciding how financial assistance was to be implemented and distributed) in the 1970s and self-management in the 1980s provided an opportunity for Aboriginal Australian to be recognised as integral members of Australian society. The Australian government touted self-management as the ultimate step towards rendering the past treatment of the Aboriginal people resolved. It also provided an opportunity for the Australian government to recognise past mistakes, ensure social justice and promote equity in all areas of society. However, self-management has become a powerful voice for the Aboriginal people that has raised the awareness and conscious of non-Aboriginal Australians into the appalling abuse and attempted annihilation of the Aboriginal people of Australia. It is not surprising in view of the historical and social events, that in the 1990s of the 80,000 in the workforce in Australian universities, only 500 are Indigenous Australians (McCulloch, 1999).

The policy of integration and assimilation failed to account for the diversity of the growing population, thereby continuing to engender inequality in education, and a marked lack of recognition of cultural values. Harrison, Godfrey and Partington (1998) acknowledge that the introduction of multiculturalism promoted an acceptance of diversity amongst Australians rather than the uniformity of integration. This led to the identification of cultural values, rights, patterns and equity of access to education for minority groups including Australian Aboriginals. The development of the multicultural policy during the Federal Race Discrimination Commission (1997) though timely, has at best given lip service and at worse ignored. On the other hand, Clark (1997) argues that policy promoting equal access to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is juxtaposed to the training modules that were employed. These modules are text-based, English only learning resources that marginalise this group of people at primary and secondary level schooling. Consequently a negative impact is experienced at tertiary level as these institutions continue to take such skills for granted (Clark, 1997).

Harris (1990) has explored Aboriginal learning and education from the construct of ‘Two-Way Schooling’. He developed a number of strategies that encouraged preservation of Aboriginal identity within the schooling system. These included religious versus positivistic thinking, relatedness versus compartmentalisation, cyclic versus linear concepts of time, being versus doing, closed versus open society and culturally distinctive styles (Harris, 1990). These strategies are based upon a belief concept that Aboriginal children are able to maintain their identity whilst adequately operating in two worlds. Specifically, the retention of the children’s primary language, story telling and doing through movement as learning processes, enhanced the overall learning experience. The extension of the concept to Aboriginal administered and controlled schooling is most appropriately applied to primary and secondary education where social, economic and political empowerment, reflect the principles of self-determination for Aboriginal people.

Between 1989 and 1993 in health related fields of study there was a three percent increase in the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in all levels of degrees. Over the same time period there was a one percent increase of non-Aboriginal students (National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People, 1994). Research into ANS’ experiences with learning is almost non-existent in Australia. Though there is literature on Non English Speaking Background (NESB) nursing students, Aboriginal students have never been included in this group and have, as a culture maintained a separate identity. Generalisations from the literature on NESB nursing students to ANS are inappropriate given the focus on language barriers as highlighted in NESB research. In ANS the barriers to nursing education are much broader and reflect deep-rooted differences in cultural beliefs. The historical mistreatment of Aborigines by the dominant non-Aboriginal society does not
provide a trusting basis for the present day relationships across the cultures. The NESB literature does not reflect this historical issue.

Literature concerned with ANS is based on unsubstantiated and superficial opinions rather than a systematic review of teaching and learning of these students. Literature that addresses teaching, learning and cultural diversity of nursing students in the USA is more prolific. For example, educational experiences of African-American students have been extensively described in the literature. A number of quantitative studies have been undertaken (Alvarez & Abriam-Yago, 1993; Allen, Nunley, and Scott-Warner, 1988; Allen 1981, A.C.T. 1979, and Jones 1979). Allen, Nunley and Scott-Warner (1988) employed a descriptive, comparative analysis of student and faculty responses to a questionnaire that sought to identify barriers to admission, retention and possible remedies for identified barriers. A convenience sample of 41 African-American female nursing students, 16 African-American faculty members and 79 Caucasian faculty members, identified issues that included the need for improved counselling, increased remedial teaching and support for tutorial programs, and increased financial aid. Other strategies such as cultural activities, role modelling, mentoring and specific pre-college programs were found to be essential to the retention of African-American students. Although findings from this study maybe relevant to students from other cultural groups, results more specifically apply to African-American students in an historical comparative context.

Holtz and Wilson (1992) developed the Model for Empowerment to explain the unique needs of culturally diverse nursing students in the academic setting in the USA. When defining cultural diversity, Holtz and Wilson (1992) determined that these nursing students demonstrate distinctive differences of human behaviour, which include, thought, speech, and customary beliefs. The model was developed to illustrate a holistic image of the process of assistance, necessary for culturally diverse students for the purpose of increasing student retention in nursing degrees. A pilot program was undertaken with 25 students. Issues such as financial assistance, cultural shock and basic academic skills were addressed on a weekly basis. Identified assumptions underpinning the study were;

1. students come from backgrounds that do not prepare them for academic study;
2. faculty members belief that these students have a decreased ability to achieve;
3. it is always necessary to assist these students to achieve;
4. culturally diverse students are a resource to fill the gap created by those who have traditionally chosen nursing;
5. faculty members have the ability to facilitate empowerment of these students;
6. there is an increasing demand by culturally diverse students for access to higher education and
7. culturally diverse students contribute and enhance the knowledge base of the student body

After three years of implementation, an increase in students remaining in the degree program was noted. Effectively their model helped nurse educators to address the needs of culturally diverse students by empowering the student. However, an increase in retention rates of only three to five students highlighted a lack of participation of the students in the pilot program. The challenge that remains for the faculty members is still the retention and participation of these students.

Research on the subject of teachers’ experiences regarding teaching ANS has not been previously reported. However, Pincombe (1986) and Stein (1993) have undertaken two pilot projects involving Aboriginal nursing students. Pincombe (1986) established that ANS enrolled in a hospital-based certificate of nursing experienced learning difficulties and devised an orientation program in which nine Aboriginal students participated. This program
consisted of study days, special arrangements for holiday leave, and non-shift duty roster and child care facilities. Prior to the establishment of childcare, four students withdrew. Of the remaining five students, only two failed but later passed resit exams. Pincombe (1986) also identified that non-completion of nursing degrees by ANS was attributed to difficulties experienced by these students with the theoretical component of the program. Modification to the nursing program specifically for ANS did not prevent an attrition rate of 50 percent. Consequently, this program was terminated at a later date for unknown reasons.

Aboriginal students enrolled in pre-registration undergraduate nursing degrees demonstrated a lack of study skills, which contributed to a high rate of non-completion of their studies (Stein, 1993). Stein instituted a pilot program with the aim of developing a skill-based process of learning. This project was highly successful, with a retention rate of 100 percent. Learning and teaching issues identified by Stein emphasised the importance of teaching competency related to the articulation of theory with practice. It also identified that the implementation of specific teaching strategies was being neglected by university teachers’ professional development. Moreover, teachers also needed to accept specific prerequisites for successful teaching. For example; logical structuring of content; ample demonstration; clear explanations and clarification all needed consideration. Linking socially relevant experiences and understanding with new concepts were needed in the preparation of teachers. Additionally, other aspects of relevance in Stein’s study indicated that ANS needed time and opportunities to learn without fear of failure and teachers needed to plan learning experiences that demonstrate congruence between theory and practice. Stein advocated a multifaceted approach to teaching and learning through development of collaborative networks between Aboriginal Education Centres and Nursing Departments.

Opportunities for professional development of academic staff, particularly in relation to cross cultural awareness are available at most universities. These include modules that address areas such as historical perspective, cultural beliefs and values, social structure, kinship, religious practices, Aboriginal education and training (Naylor, 1998). However, evidence of these teaching strategies is not reflected in the retention rate of Aboriginal nursing students in Western Australia. A review of academic records at one School of Nursing revealed, of the twenty-nine ANS enrolled in all levels of degrees over a ten year period, only four successfully graduated, ten withdrew, four deferred and eight remain enrolled within the time allowed. Stein (1993) identified the fact that convincing teaching staff that Aboriginal students have the ability to achieve at a desired level, despite the gaps in their experience with aspects of the discipline, remains a major difficulty. Stein (1993) further stated that when addressing the teaching and learning issues identified through Aboriginal learners’ experiences, all students would greatly benefit. Jones (1997) strongly advocated that the diversity of a multicultural society requires professional nursing standards, which can only be achieved through the diverse cultural background of the workforce. Furthermore, she claims it is time to redress the ‘professional ethnocentrism’ identified in the nursing programs which maybe be attributed to the fact that nursing is an Anglo-dominated profession (Maltby, 1999).

In view of the paucity of research studies in this area, there is a need for further study to discover the similarities and differences of learning and teaching ANS from the perspective of ANS and their teachers. Phase One of this qualitative phenomenological study included interviewing ANS to describe and examine their perceptions of learning and teaching. Over the past two years there has been increased attention focused on Aboriginal students’ academic progress at tertiary level. Phase One has provided a rich insight into ANS experiences and factors that enhance and inhibit their progress through the degree. However, this account is one-sided.
Developing this qualitative study further to incorporate the lived experience of academic nursing teachers with ANS, has provide a more balanced perspective of the issues that must be considered in the teaching-learning process of ANS. This research was directed toward exploring the lived experience of ANS’ perceptions of learning at tertiary level and the lived experiences of academic nursing lecturers teaching of ANS. A decision was made to use a phenomenological methodology to describe and explore ANS’ and academic nursing teachers lived experiences of teaching and learning. Husserlian phenomenology, being descriptive in nature, offers such a methodology. The findings of this study will assist in identifying the ANS’ perceptions of learning and teaching at tertiary level and academic nursing teachers attitudes, behaviours and depth of understanding of ANS learning processes. This study will serve to provide insight into possible strategies to address issues of teaching and learning of ANS at a tertiary level.

Setting and background

This study was undertaken in two tertiary education institutions in Western Australia. The first group of participants in this study had to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders nursing students. This was ascertained by their enrolment data. Therefore, if the student did not identify their Aboriginality on enrolment, the academic registrars of the tertiary institutions would not approach them. Further criteria for inclusion was that the participants must be enrolled in an undergraduate nursing degree, completed one semester and be 18 yrs of age or over. Therefore, the participants could be at any stage throughout a three or three and a half year nursing degree, and could have completed as little as two units (if part-time students), or be enrolled in their final semester of study. Seven out of a possible eleven completed the interviews (Appendix.1). The second group included, the Head of Aboriginal Study Centres from respective universities, two Head of each School of Nursing and thirteen members of the academic nursing lecturers of the Schools of Nursing and three Aboriginal Study Centre academics (Appendix.2). The criteria for inclusion required that the participant hold a permanent academic position within the School of Nursing or Aboriginal Studies Centre or be the Head of School in the School of Nursing in one of the two universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and explore ANS’ lived experiences with learning in pre registration undergraduate nursing degrees. Secondly, the study will explore academic nursing lectures lived experiences of teaching ANS and the impact of their experiences on the learning experience of ANS whilst undertaking a tertiary nursing qualification. The objectives guiding this study are:

1. To explore and describe the perceptions of ANS undertaking an undergraduate nursing degree.
2. To explore and describe perceptions of academic nursing lecturers teaching of ANS.
3. To identify the factors that is perceived by ANS and academic nursing lecturers that enhance and/or inhibit their learning processes.
4. To identify if the learning processes are related to the ANS’ cultural identity and diversity.

For the purpose of this paper, the global findings will be discussed. This involves the conceptual framework (Figure. 1.) ‘Journey From Dreamtime To Graduation’, which illustrates the impact of not only the ANS’s perceptions, but also the perceptions of academics experiences of ANS, perceptions of their own behaviours and those of fellow academics, and the implications of university policies and behaviours.
Analysis of the data was guided by the process outlined by van Kaam (1966), as modified by Sandelowski and Pollock (1986). Additional modifications by Munhall and Boyd (1993) to this process include a reduction in sample size and the replacement of written descriptions with interviews to obtain the core of the experience. Once the procedure is determined and transcription of the interview (verbatim) completed, the following steps were pursued in the course of the analysis. Firstly, each word or phrase descriptive of some aspect of the experience was listed then a common core of similar expressions clustered and labelled. At this point incongruous expressions were removed. Secondly, close relationships determined within the groups were clustered, labelled and these tentatively isolated core elements crossed checked with a random sample of the original descriptions. Finally, each expression must be expressed in the description, be expressed or implied in some of or the majority of descriptions and be compatible with those expressions it is not expressed in. If incompatibility was found with a constituent then it must be proven that some other experience has intruded (Munhall & Boyd, 1993; Streubert & Carpenter, 1995).

Findings

ANS experiences can not be examined without placing in context the influence and behaviours of ANL’s and the university behaviours (Figure.2). The conceptual framework illustrates the five major themes as extrapolated from ANS perceptions. Each of these themes is interconnected due to the cyclic influence of the culture. To view a students’ Aboriginality in isolation of there learning styles is to attempt to tease apart the very essence of their existence. Therefore, intrinsically each theme’s descriptors are shared amongst the others and thereby colours their expectations, behaviours and experiences within the tertiary setting. Of the original seventy descriptors only one remains in isolation due to the students experience of being from the ‘lost generation’. The other sixty-nine descriptors were collapsed to thirty-two core elements. The following provide a description of the themes and their linkages:

**Living the Traditional ways of Being;**

Describes a sense of tradition, culture, respect, sense of identity and recognition of self worth.

**Knowing the Different Ways of Learning;**

Encompasses story telling, personal development, traditional learning.

**The Journey of Dream Time to Graduation**

Includes internal motivation, altruistic behaviour, roles, leadership, previous experience and commitment.

**Coping with Social Inequities**

Social issues such as political, economic, feelings of anger/frustration, lack of understanding between the cultures and a need.

**Recognising Issues that Enhance and Inhibit ANS progress**

Incorporates descriptors from the above and includes approachability, genuineness, sense of support/encouragement, expectations and cultural shock.
When examining the interviews of the ANL, their behaviours and perceptions are strongly influenced by past experiences with the Aboriginal culture or lack thereof, preconceived beliefs, teaching styles and university behaviours and policies. Again in this phase of the study descriptors were extrapolated from the interviews, core elements examined and clustered into themes. One hundred and eighty-five descriptors were identified from the
interviews, these were then clustered as sixty-seven core elements of which eight themes emerged. Six are directly connected to ANL whereas two were developed from the perceptions of ANL in relation to current institutional behaviours and strategies that the ANL and institution could develop to aid the enrolment and retention of ANS. In phase two there were no isolated elements. The themes extrapolated as shown in Figure 2, bear a direct influence on the ANS experiences. This is best illustrated by descriptors attached to these themes.

**Being culturally unique:**

Includes issues that ANS may experience as a result of presumptions or assumptions of ANL.

Traditional behaviours, inability to adapt to health system as perceived by ANL

Impact on progress versus cultural perspective and the stringency of scholarship requirements

Effect of Anglo saxonised health system on a person who is shy, non-assertive and gentle.

ANS are seen as being unreliable by ANL due to their responsibilities to their close ties to family taking priority.

How indigenous people perceive family.

ANS should develop strategies, seek support externally; will do badly as presumed by ANL.

ANS will struggle, due to poor previous education, unable to grasp theory, alcoholism in families, community drags back down, poor economic environment presumption that they must have been truant in previous schooling.

ANS do not approach the nursing degree with the same expectations as non-aboriginals

ANS should be more assertive, approachable. Should develop strategies ‘white man's behaviour’

Understanding what connects indigenous students to their culture and how broad a range of people exist under the label of ‘aboriginal’.

ANS are perceived to be shy, considerate and respectful all the time.

Perception that ANS are reticent to ask questions and seek information for themselves

Those laws and beliefs inherent to indigenous nations in Australia

Identification through physical appearance with the expectation that if they don't look Aboriginal 'they are not Aboriginal'

Expected behaviours related to behaviours such as drinking, violence, and inability to learn.

Marginalised by other students/staff.

Verbal and nonverbal behaviour by staff/students
Living away from their community and family, also related to the presumption that all aboriginals "get on" because they are Aboriginal.

**Effects of loss of contact with community**

When indigenous people are purposely pointed out in lectures by alienating them

The perceived advantages and disadvantages of being Aboriginal and the inequity in comparison to other students

**Government handouts**

Assimilation into the university way of life, whilst maintaining family and community ties

The effect of living in the accepted ‘norm’ as others does whilst maintaining their cultural norm

ANS similarities and needs as perceived by ANL with students from multicultural backgrounds and Overseas students

Behaviours recognised in all students

International and Asian students

As shown by Figure 2, ANS exposed to these attitudes will often not complete their first year of study. If they do, they remain isolated and will perform academically poorly unless the support and insight is shown by academics and students. If they do continue past this point the following behaviours can act both positively and negatively on their progress and professional development.

**Teaching and Learning Strategies that ANL may use with either ANS or all students**

One to one, sense of equality, respect, acceptance, individuality

Where the students respond on a singular basis with lecturer

To be treated with deference and esteem as an equal

Be treated as a person, an individual and then an indigenous person

Sharing differences and commonalities, reflecting on these and seeking feedback

Story telling, sensitivity, support, time frames,

The use of oration in a story type fashion to convey a message

Story telling that is traditionally acceptable without breaching mores.
Providing the students with sense of perceptiveness and source of strength

Providing an example of best practice, behaviour.

Teaching concepts in the tone of where it all fits in the big picture, use of models, visualisation

Being appropriate to the students style of learning

A copy dummy or facsimile of the theory, object or principle to be explored

Ability to provide an image of an abstract concept

Using own life situations or the students to convey a message

The need for individual assessment extended duration to met unit requirements

**Negative Teaching Strategies Identified by ANL**

Same strategies suits all, unaware of language barriers, own education Federal Government rhetoric of historical view.

All students are required to be self directed, reflective learners regardless of culture. All are taught using universal approach

Believed that verbal communication is only a problem with overseas students

Federal government view imposed on ANL own primary and secondary education

Lack of awareness of the difference between teaching with large student numbers versus those smaller group sizes and the evolution of mini teaching sessions

Lack of awareness of impact of lecture theatre contact versus small groups

ANS should record their aboriginality officially

ANL's if aware of ANS in class may be more vigilant in attention to progress in unit. Being aware of verbal and non-verbal language of students when assessing understanding of concepts

The process of being able to flexibly consider diverse needs of all students

Assisting the student with the ability to deal with the issues

Utilising differing approaches of teaching to meet the ANS needs

Make clear requirements of assignments, time lines, and approachability

The separation of students from diverse cultural backgrounds from other students to engender and met needs
Behaviours of ANL:

These include positive and negative and approaches to the students ANL should demonstrate

These are seen by ANL to be negative approaches in teaching ANS

A subtle form of defining a student by their culture, which is negative

Includes speech pattern, volume, and body language

Positive and negative, that is ANS will do poorly, will always research Indigenous issues, and approachability is ANS responsibility

The limited attention given to students leads to brash, curt responses

Behaviours are governed by Anglo saxonised social mores and boundaries

The Ugly stuff

Westernised attitudes and westernised teaching methods

The Anglo-saxonised process of teaching as inherited from colonial times (British system)

Images promoted through media, socialisation

Lack of knowledge in how to deal with ANS issues leads to avoidance

Refers to the process of decreased exposure to theory practice units and their integration

ANL unable to identify how to meet the needs of multicultural student body

Behaviours that imply an intrinsic superiority of one culture over others.

Behaviours which are culturally derisive between students

ANL that are inflexible and show minimal acceptance of those different to them

Behaviours, which are culturally based and derisive towards colleagues

Behaviours formed from stereotyping students according to assumptions based on race

Behaviours derived from the overall university towards culturally different people particularly indigenous students

Failure and or enrolment rate through lack of physical identification, identity

Comparative attrition rates
**Affirmative behaviours**

These are those behaviours that ANL believe are positive towards ANS.

Awareness of the need to develop a relationship, inhibited by male-to-male and female-to-female gender relationships

When students need the added help to connect theory to practice or when a lecture feels that he/she can assist the acquisition of knowledge

Placing emphasis on the need of each singular person as unique individual

Perceived ideas of the Aboriginal health model, overall health of Aboriginals and understanding of Indigenous people.

Indigenous health model being less, invasive, gentler, slower, collaborative, telling story of health, truly holistic

Understanding of Indigenous people and health issues

**Attitudes and approaches ANL believe all ANL should demonstrate towards ANS**

We are all nurses therefore we should practice what we preach

The students are the ‘bread and butter’ of universities and we should refocus our priorities

With AS Centres and other support persons, build relationship with students

ASC need to collaborate with other university departments to engendering indigenous education

ANL require communication and strategies from the ASC

Empower, connect with, increase approachability and encouragement, treat as individuals, and encourage assertiveness

Consciousness of the issues that affect ANS, being able to identify own deficits, more cultural sensitivity, support, flexible approach

Knowledge deficit, cultural sensitivity, re culture, health, language barrier

Exposure to ANS would undertake short course in Indigenous health or Understanding Indigenous people

If more aware of the students be able to monitor more closely
Diverse approaches to meet the individuals needs, customise courses, be seen to be supportive, no finite visits, no time restrictions and access restriction

Awareness of ANS commitments

Demonstrate a perceptiveness and high regard for students, colleagues.

ANL should demonstrate an understanding of the Indigenous culture

ANL should feel able to address colleague’s inappropriate racist behaviours

The process of being available and open to student queries

**ANL experience feelings of coping experiences/Pressure/time constraints**

Workload

Factory mentality

Student’s negative responses induce negative responses from ANL

Emotionally overwhelmed

If a barrier of protection not in place, students needs can emotionally overwhelm

When pressured the chance of becoming abrupt and curt increases

The lack of usable equipment in respect of group sizes

Staff numbers

Feelings of inadequacy related to own knowledge of unit being taught

Sensitivity related to awareness of Indigenous people’s plight, health care, time required to rectify present state, but no concept as to ‘being aboriginal’

There are two sides of the coin in meeting ANS needs, need to meet halfway

Capable achievers, address media stereotyping, professional experience decreases negative cynicism, contact with elders

Where exemplary teaching and support of the students goes unrecognised particularly when the student’s opinions are relegated to last priority

Due to the ongoing unchanged attitudes ANL feel stonewalled and unable to facilitate the changes required to meet culturally diverse students needs

ANL remain positive in their belief that change can be achieved for the better of culturally diverse students
Current Institutional behaviours

This refers to how the university, faculty or school has dealt with the issues of ANS in the past

Inflexibility; related to stringency of time, behaviours within academic arena that disallows consideration of extraneous factors re students progress

Curriculum loading

Resistance from within the ‘old guard’

AMA expectations do not consider time requirements of ANS, too stringent

Inadequate or ill determined guidelines re indigenous education with the university

Aboriginal Study Centre isolation

Sudden impetus to increase enrolments without strategies

The difficult process of where funding can be obtained and what happens to the current federal funding supplied to universities for indigenous education

The process and difficulties academics and schools experience due to an inadequate and inaccurate enrolment program

Words are not enough; the assessment of staff and evaluation of the programs re indigenous students must be backed at all levels of leadership

Institutional staff development; It's all been said before 'boring as bat shit'

The noticeable small numbers of academics that maintain their cultural diversity or are employed by universities

Recommendations

Strategies To Increase Enrolments And Retention Of ANS

The following strategies proposed have been directly derived from the participants of this study.

These recommendations involve the development of strategies at university, faculty and school level.

University:

Teach academics to be culturally sensitive and need professional development on cultural issues
Review time requirement to complete course, recognise individual difficulties re family, social and schooling, meet the students halfway,

To discourage racist behaviours within the student body and increase cultural awareness

To revisit the appropriateness of group teaching numbers and styles of teaching that will lead to the appropriate level of professional development

Ensure that future teachers are armed with the appropriate strategies to address cultural diversity in the classroom and include in the future structure of units

The process of future and current staff evaluation in terms of being able to teach in a culturally diverse setting

CATSIN and a unified group from all WA universities ANS’s

Recognise and operationalise current and future research into cultural diversity and needs of students

A clear decisive standpoint to be written and applied in the everyday running of the university in term of Indigenous students

Future changes to the curriculum be considered in terms of flexibility, diversity, cultural content and consideration for indigenous people

Review time constraints, large student numbers, "factory mentality", which leads to students being dealt with quickly

Faculty:

Determine ANS specific needs by asking ANS

Address factors, which influence ANS learning and factors, which influence interactions/communication

Teach academics to be culturally sensitive and need professional development on cultural issues

Customise program for rural ANS and recruit through rural areas

Indigenous health unit to developed or incorporate with collaboration with KKJ

Seeking the appropriate participation of the indigenous communities to address curriculum flexibility

Review of withdrawal procedure for all students to help decrease unnecessary withdrawals

Compulsory communication with the ASC re developing future students for the nursing degree re bridging coarse

Assessing and incorporating possible teaching strategies that will benefit ANS
Need for increased interaction between students, academics, ASC, and school re problems and early intervention strategies. This includes how ANS and ANL cope and what contributes to feelings of inability to cope.

Review time constraints, large student numbers, "factory mentality", which leads to students being dealt with quickly.

**School:**

- Publicly promote SON for future ANS
- Promote need for Indigenous nurses
- ANS liaison person to be appointed to assist in increasing the understanding of ANS's needs.
- Assist in bridging the gap between ANL & ANS and encourage voluntary disclosure
- Determine ANS specific needs by asking ANS
- Identify new students in semester one to support and identify secondary school students to enter nursing
- Address factors, which influence ANS learning and factors, which influence interactions/communication
- Teach academics to be culturally sensitive and need professional development on cultural issues
- Open forum to determine academics needs
- Past ANS, CATSIN, and aboriginal RN's as mentors and support persons
- Customise program for rural ANS and recruit through rural areas
- Indigenous health unit to developed or incorporate with collaboration with KKJ
- Review time constraints, large student numbers, "factory mentality", which leads to students being dealt with quickly
References


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**APPENDIX. 1. (Table. 1. Aboriginal Nursing Students Demographics)**

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APPENDIX. 2. (Table 2. Academic Lecturers Demographics)
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>RN</td>
<td>BA. P/G Dip Soc Sc(counselling)</td>
<td>Lect A+B</td>
<td>Post Grad Dip Clinical Prog</td>
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<td>RN, RM</td>
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<td>RN, PN</td>
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<td>Australian</td>
<td>RN, STN</td>
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**Table Note:**
- Male, Female columns indicate gender.
- Australian, Chinese columns indicate nationality.
- RN, RM, RN, PN, STN columns indicate professional qualifications.
- BA, BappSc, MSc columns indicate academic degrees.
- Yes, No columns indicate contract status.

**Additional Information:**
- Post Grad Dip Clinical Prog: Master of Social Work
- Relieving Undergraduate Clinical: Master of Nursing
- Undergrad Theory: Bachelor of Science
- S O N: School of Nursing
<table>
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<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>NURSING QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>POSITION HELD</th>
<th>COURSE COORDINATOR</th>
<th>UNIT CO</th>
<th>HOS</th>
<th>LENGTH OF EMPLOY</th>
<th>TYPE OF EMPLOY</th>
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Irish