



Professional Engagement

Standard 6 – Professional Learning

Significant Episode: My 'Cultural Competency'

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Finding 6.6: Self reflection

Focus on the development of critical self-reflection so you are more able to actively challenge deficit views and assumptions you and others may have about Indigenous learners and their communities.

As a part of the *Make It Count* Project, I was privileged to attend Cultural Competencies workshops at Monash University with Dr Henry Atkinson. It was incredibly interesting and humbling to learn more about Aboriginal culture and history and to talk with others about our thoughts, feelings, perceptions and attitudes in a safe environment where open and honest conversations were fostered.

I was lucky enough to have learnt about (some) Indigenous history at school and while I am by no means an expert, it was interesting to find that many other educators and support staff had not been privy to a similar education. It highlighted to me the variance in prior knowledge in all learners, not just children, and how important it is to share, know and learn the history and culture of Indigenous Australia.

Having developed a greater awareness of Indigenous culture, I was able to ensure that I included Indigenous perspectives more often into my planning and teaching and work towards making activities authentic. I have the Aboriginal flag hanging up proudly next to the Australian flag in my classroom. We bring Indigenous perspectives into maths tasks, science lessons, literacy activities, etc. We learn about Indigenous plants and plant use. We invite our local Elders into our school to share culture and stories, allowing the children to develop deeper connections to their culture. These are just some examples; I will always seek to enhance the authenticity of tasks to make them meaningful and enjoyable for every learner.

"It highlighted to me...how important it is to share the history and culture of Indigenous Australia."

Some questions to prompt discussion:

- 1. Why is it important for non-Aboriginal teachers to talk about their 'thoughts, feeling, perceptions and attitudes' about Aboriginal culture and history in a safe environment?**
- 2. Why is it important for teachers to challenge their own deficit views and assumptions and those of others about Aboriginal learners and their communities?**
- 3. What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?**

