**Name:** Reem Boudali **Week:** 4 **Date Submitted:** March 12, 2020

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| **Criteria** | **Reflective Thoughts** |
| **Look Back (L):** | Professionalism is often defined as the behaviour that individuals within a profession display along with the conduct, qualities, values, vision, mission and/or goals that they are expected to have by their profession (Bimray, Jooste & Julie, 2019). For nursing, professionalism entails therapeutic communication, maintaining patient privacy and confidentiality, respect, responsibility, and accountability. It is important for all nurses to display these qualities so that patients feel comfortable during their care. As patients are almost like customers to nurses, it is vital that nurses provide them with the best version of the service they are looking for. |
| **Examine Experience (E):** | I believe nursing professionalism is so important to teach because it seems to be on a decline within nursing. I believe that current social trends and culture have instilled a casual persona amongst professionals. While it is okay to have this aspect outside of work, nurses must be able to maintain a professional practice within the clinical setting. Professional nurses take their jobs seriously and understand their importance of their actions towards patient goals of care. Having this outlook prevents mistakes, such as overlooking patient complaints, because a nurse will consider every piece of information relevant to the case. It may also provide a nurse skills, such as critical thinking and decision-making, because the nurse will be focused on the patient’s health over anything else like emotions.  Through this reflective journal I would like to learn more about professionalism in nursing as it pertains to nursing students. I want to know whether the quality is innate or can be taught through school. I can apply the knowledge I gain to my own clinical practice and to my education as a nursing student. |
| **Appraise & Analyze the Clinical Event (A):** | The article I will be focusing on is a qualitative study that examines the experiences about nursing professionalism of South African student nurses. Bimray et al. (2019) analyzed experiences from students in first year all the way to fourth year. They found that many of the students received mixed messages about professionalism in nursing because they witnessed lots of instances of unprofessional behaviour. For example, some of the nurse practitioners would use humiliating and demoralising communication towards student nurses (Bimray et al., 2019). Insulting students in front of patients will negatively affect students’ dignity and confidence, and make patients feel uncomfortable or cause distrust towards students. Students identified mutual respect, kindness, politeness or good manners, and punctuality as basic components of nursing professionalism. Moreover, they expressed the importance of a non-judgemental learning environment, so students do not feel guilty for not know information. Finally, the students suggested that professional standards be more integrated into curriculum to help nurses know what they are accountable for. Bimray et al. (2019) conclude that nursing instructors are highly influential to shaping their students’ behaviour and outlook on professionalism; therefore, schools should ensure proper behaviours are being taught in class and instructors are displaying professionalism for students to follow.  I completely agree with both the students and the authors. While I have not had any nurses demoralize me, many nurses I have observed do not reflect what I am being taught in class. Fortunately, many of the nurses I work with are kind and respectful, but they also cut corners with their work and have an unhealthy gossip culture. Other classmates with different placements have told me stories of nurses being rude to patients: one nurse complained to a student about a patient in front of the patient, claiming the patient could not hear anything. These behaviours can make it seem to student nurses that these actions are acceptable, when in fact they go against the values of the profession. Nursing students should be taught to recognize these clashes in values and be encouraged to speak out against these behaviours in the clinical setting.  More experienced nurses may say that nursing professionalism is not an important topic because they perceive that they have the power in the nurse-client relationship and believe that enables them to act as they please. As Bimray et al. (2019) previously stated, mutual respect is a value that eradicates this issue. Understanding that your title and power should not translate to abuse of that power, helps ground people and make them aware of their actions.  This concept of professionalism extends to all fields where there is a difference in power. Anyone providing services or teaching someone skills of a trade should ensure they are respectful and professional when doing so. By doing so, they create a positive image for themselves and their profession. This image is extremely particular important in nursing. Currently, a large portion of the public views nurses badly due to incidents that occur on social media. For example, a nurse using the platform Tiktok posted a video stating that the only way to prevent STIs is by having sexual intercourse only after marriage. This video went viral and angered many people as the information is misleading and bias: it is still possible to get STIs after marriage if proper interventions are not taken. Although the nurse had good intentions, her video clashed with the values of nursing by placing judgement on a specific topic. Moreover, the nurse’s video showcased her opinion instead of sourced facts. Unfortunately, many people took her video as a base for all nurses and added to the fire by sharing their own negative experience with judgemental nurses. These issues bring up the question of how far professionalism extends; are nurses required to remain professional even outside of traditional working hours? |
| **Research & Revision (R):** | Overall, I learned that the experiences and observations of nursing students in the clinical setting highly influence nursing students’ perceptions on their careers in the field. Furthermore, it can influence the way they practice; negative observations and experiences can lead to a lack of nursing professionalism. More research should be conducted about disciplinary actions regarding a lack of nursing professionalism, as well as, more techniques to improve professionalism. |
| **New Perspective (N):** | As a student nurse, I can make sure to read all practice standards listed by the College of Nurses of Ontario to familiarize myself with all my accountabilities. I can observe the nurses I work with and identify which behaviours align with nursing values and which ones conflict. Using self-reflection techniques, I can analyze my faults and incorporate the good actions into my practice. If I decide to become an instructor is the future, I will make sure to teach from the mindset of a student so that I properly teaching students the knowledge and behaviours they should learn as nurses. |
| **References:** | Bimray, P., Jooste, K., & Julie, H. (2019). Professionalism experiences of undergraduate learner nurses during their 4-year training programme at a higher education institution in the Western Cape, South Africa. *Curationis, 42*(1), 2030. doi:10.4102/curationis.v42i1.2030 |