

Identifying Learning Goal –Professional Knowledge

Upon reading the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) provided by the instructor Professor Simons of this course SOWK-718, this writer feels that as of now, she is most prepared to begin doing the following listed items. After graduating, the items listed are in order from most prepared to lesser prepared. (a.) Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (b.) Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior. (c.) Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (d.) Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. (e.) Evaluate practice with individuals and (f.) Engage diversity and differences in practice.

The EPAS for which this writer feels that she is least prepared are (a.) Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. (b.) Engage practice informed research and research informed practice and (c.) Engage in policy practice. Given the expectations for social workers outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, this writer feels that the wealth of knowledge passed on from many of the well-informed instructors and the opportunity to apply this knowledge on a massive scale has given this writer a level of confidence that transcends my greatest expectation. With the knowledge, thus far acquired, it is a career goal of this social worker to explore several different areas of social work and to live the lifestyle and the mindset of many of those affected by the adverse circumstances surrounding them. Another career goal of this social work is to continue to evaluate and cultivate myself, thereby making a concerted and sincere effort to discern realistically my own strengths and weaknesses, and subsequently strive to make self-improvement a life-long venture.

There are certain learning goals that this writer needs to set for herself this semester in order to begin her professional practice in May. These goals include: (a.) Successfully completing the course work required by the Social Work Department of the University of South Carolina. (b.) Implementing a plan by which the learning goals can be put into practice. (c.) Discovering a means by which the learning goals can actually be put into practice.

This class can be used to help this writer achieve the learning goals fore mentioned by acting as a platform to determine the academic, social, professional skills, and to some extent the

economic means required to make these goals attainable.

Reference

<https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/EPAS-Handbook>

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I meet these challenges by the use of creative thinking. The Capstone assignments are quite challenging to complete and require one to do a lot of research. They also require one to think critically about the cases presented to provide the best analysis. These assignments are challenging and at times make me doubt my ability to complete them. I at times feel that I do not have the tools and understanding to complete the tasks presented. In spite of this, I use creative strategies to allow me to complete the tasks. I always ensure that I carry out group discussions before I complete these assignments. Using group discussions helps me come up with creative ways to solve the assignments as I get creative ideas from the rest of the group members (Davidson & Sternberg, 2003). The group members also correct any fallacies in my reasoning enabling me to make the best analysis in my case studies. I also ensure that I think critically about the experiences of the case studies presented. This allows me to understand the challenges they may be facing and make the proper analysis of their mental condition.

I do not believe that I will approach challenges in a different way. Critical thinking is essential to effective problem-solving. Critical thinking allows one to conduct a thorough analysis of the problem and the possible solutions. It also ensures that the individual can assess the rationale for their decision to ensure that the best possible solution is taken (Robertson, 2017). I currently use critical thinking in all the challenges I face, and I do not believe that I will change this method of problem-solving. I also will continue using creativity to solve my problems. Creativity is the use of original ideas to solve problems or create something. Using creativity allows one to come up with the most effective solutions for the problems one may face. This ensures that an individual can solve their problems in the most effective way possible.

References

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Every person is involved in doing things that are helpful in life. In order for me to do this, I have to be aware of certain things. Having clear and especially short-term goals will help me work hard towards achieving my goals (Heidi Grant- Halvorson, 2012). The goals should be clearly defined and time-bound. I should also know that confidence and willpower is the key to helping me handle challenges and the chances of achieving my goals.

In order to make a good decision in my place of work as a social worker, the experience is important because it gives me the abilities to use my intuition, knowledge, and skills well (Carolyn Spray, Beverley Jowett, 2011). For instance, if I conduct a home visit, as an experienced social worker, I will be aware in observing the heuristics, and identify whether they have experienced the same situation in endeavoring to know if the child is urgently in need.

I can use my professional knowledge in making decisions. The decisions made here are more analytical based on my expertise in social work. It is rare for social workers to make decisions alone thus needs support from colleagues and peers. As a social worker, I would regularly check my thinking, how I judge and my decisions with that of my colleagues and peers irrespective of the time, my experience and rank. They will guide me on checking whether my thinking and reflection are right.

In conclusion, it is clear that, for me to be able to do things in life, I need to have clear goals and have confidence in what I will do. It is good to involve my peers and colleagues in decision making. It is also evident that experience is vital in the field of social work because it will help me in making good decisions pertaining to work.

REFERENCES

- Carolyn Spray, Beverley Jowett. (2011). *Social Work Practice with Children and Families*. SAGE.
- Heidi Grant- Halvorson. (2012). *9 Things Successful People Do Differently*. Harvard Business Press.

Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset

Findings have shown that there are two basic mindsets that shape our lives. These mindsets include the Fixed Mindset vs. The Growth Mindset. Carol S. Dweck, describes the difference in the two mindsets as follows: “A Fixed mindset assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are static given which we cannot change in a meaningful way, and success is the affirmation of that inherit intelligence, an assessment of how those given measures up against an equally fixed standard”. “A growth mindset on the contrary, thrives on challenges and sees failure not as evidence of intelligence, but as a heartening spring board for growth and for stretching our existing abilities”. Dweck indicate that these mindsets can have a great impact on the behavior we exhibit, our relationships with success and failure and ultimately our capacity for happiness. Given these definitions, the quiz results and information from the “Brain Pickings” article, this writer concludes that the “growth mindset” best characterizes her mindset type. Upon completing the quiz relating to this topic, the answers describing the growth mindset outnumbered those describing the fixed mindset, thus this writer concluded that these result in addition to other information, denotes that she has a growth mindset. Reflecting on the thoughts occupying the mind of this writer, further depicts a growth mindset. A passion for learning, self-improvement, not giving up easily, and a willingness to work hard are qualities that best characterizes this writer.

Whenever this writer starts a job, regardless of its difficulty she has a strong urgency to see what the end is going to bring, consequently, quitting is very seldom an option. Though quitting was seldom an option, failure was something that this writer had to deal with from time to time. She was always told by her parents, however, that when we face down, we get back up again and try harder the next time. These experiences made this writer who she is today.

There are areas of the growth mindset exhibited by this writer that she personally would like to adjust. One such area is that of over exertion. In an effort to accomplish all of the items on an agenda, this writer will stay up late into the late night, early morning to accomplish those obligations. It may be said that time is the stuff of life and how one uses it speaks volumes about their character, personality, and overall make-up.

Reference

David L, "Mindset Theory – Fixed vs. Growth Mindset (Dweck)," in *Learning Theories*, December 14, 2015, <https://www.learning-theories.com/mindset-theory-fixed-vs-growth-mindset-dweck.html>.

Self-awareness & Tolerance

Research reveals that a clear understanding of ourselves enhances our ability to be tolerant of others. The saying “Know thyself and to thine own self be true”, in essence is the avenue to a wholesome acceptance of one’s self and their counterparts. Self-awareness and self-acceptance are in, the opinion of this writer, vital attributes to acquiring and maintaining wholesome relationships with those around us.

The issues raised in this class SOWK-718 under the instruction of Professor Simons have helped this writer take a closer view of herself in terms of how she views others. The reading entitled “Putting Clients First”, did much to promote an awareness of what steps should be taken to become less self-centered and more open to the needs of others. The dialog between the students and the instructor in this class helped this writer to recognize her strengths and weaknesses in relating to others. In reading the article fore mentioned, it can be said that there are certain attributes that encompasses the self-awareness and tolerance any person exhibits.

Some of these attributes includes the ability to recognize one’s own self-worth and making it known by combating the “isms”, stereotypes, and myths one individual or group may have toward another. A second attribute is the ability to provide emotional support, by helping to relieve anxiety, worry, and fear observed in others, and a third attribute is the ability to be tolerant of the short comings of others. Assessing our tolerance can be a challenge if we find it difficult to accept the viewpoint of others. How tolerant we are is good indication of our self-awareness. Knowing the importance of developing self-awareness is the key to how well it is done. In the reading “Putting the Client First”, it is suggested that (1.) Developing self-awareness is important because values, beliefs, attitudes, and fears are a guide to day to day behavior. (2.) Developing self-awareness influences interpretation, explanation and response to events. (3.) Developing self-awareness are usually specific to the culture in which they evolved. (4.) Developing self-awareness is important because it may vary between and within families, groups, countries, and regions.

In summary, it may be said that in essence, how well we relate to ourselves is contingent

upon our knowledge of self.

Reference

Dinshaw, F.M. (2012). Putting clients first. Ishoni Professional Development, Toronto, Canada

Ethical dilemmas in most cases involves situation whereby two or more moral decisions are supposed to be made about a given situation.(Duff & Campbell,1973) The collective processes in class has been critical in my past ethical dilemma process. For instance I have always learnt the need to have moral consideration in coming up with several decisions in life experiences that I come across in my normal daily activities.in summary, the theoretical knowledge in class is very vital in my course of practical actions.

Two people whom I'm really comfortable with in my life are my husband Al and my mother Carol. On the other hand the two people whom I do not like are Victoria who is my colleague at work and Jeff who was my previous administrator. I like my husband and mom because we share similar interests while I dislike my workmates because they are always uncooperative at work and in major cases they are not team players.

I have gained in-depth knowledge about ethical decision making that is critical in navigating my dilemma. First and foremost I have been able to debate moral choices in coming up with several solutions, For instance in reference to the cases above concerning Jeff and Victoria I would make services available to them in cases where there is need without discriminating them based on our conflicting views and misunderstandings.

The main approach to ethical approach I have learned about ethical decision making is mainly the balance sheet approach whereby in coming up with a given decision I have to take into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of such a decision. I would thereby settle on a decision whose advantage outweighs disadvantages of the other. For instance, in reference to relating with my workmates, it would be more advantageous to relate well with them at work regardless of our conflicting views in any case they are my clients (Lo, 2012)

In major cases, ethical decision have the main strength of promoting uniformity which is characterized by fairness and just taking into consideration the moral options one has to consider in coming up with a given decision. On the other hand ethical decisions and reasoning are always characterized by limited flexibilities. In a professional scenario, some decisions are always made that conflict the interest of others in a given environment.

References

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Putting a limit on responsibility is hard. One can never determine the boundaries to which one will be responsible for someone's life. When I read the story, the first thought in my mind was that the man was selfish for letting go of the rope and letting the stranger fall to his death. But after some reflection, I realized that the stranger did not take any effort to help himself. He threw himself off the bridge and delegated the responsibility of his life to another person and was not interested in helping himself up. In reality, the stranger was the selfish man because he expected the man to abandon his life and goals and focus on keeping him alive. It made me realize that you can only help someone who wants to help themselves. Therefore, the man's decision to let go of the rope was merited because he could not manage to help the man. If I were in the man's position, I would also let go of the rope, because you cannot have the answer to another person's problems and you cannot be responsible for another man's life.

The social services practice seeks to help individuals to overcome their problems and have prosperous lives. However, there are certain limits to the practice. The social services worker cannot compel a client to change their ways. The worker is not responsible for the client's life and only serves as a guide to help the client overcome their problems and help themselves up to make their life better (Zastrow, 2009). However, when the client refuses to use any of the strategies you provide to improve their quality of life, the social worker is no longer responsible for the life of the client. Many social workers get frustrated when the client is not making any progress, but the social worker must consider the fact that they are not responsible for the lives of the patient and one should only help the patient better themselves.

This story has changed my perception of helping people. I previously thought as a professional you have to help your patients make the right decisions in life and steer their lives

on the right path. However, I have come to realize that as a professional, your work is to guide them through the rough patches in life and help them resolve their problems. You cannot change someone's life for them and neither can you make decisions for them (Cournoyer, 2008). You cannot be very involved in your client's life. If the client does not respond to any technique you use to help them, that means they do not want to be helped, and it is okay to let the client go. Therefore, one should not feel guilty for not being able to help a client who did not show any signs of improving their lifestyle. The social services work is a team effort between the social worker and the client, but if the client isn't willing to carry out their role, then the social worker is justified in letting go of them.

This means that the social services practice is not meant to eliminate the troubles in a client's life but is meant to guide the client to eliminate the obstacles in their life. The social worker should maintain a professional relationship with the patient where the patient is not fully dependent on the worker for their life decisions (Zastrow, 2009). The worker should only guide the client to improve their life.

References

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Zastrow, C. (2009). *Social work with groups: a comprehensive workbook*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

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The interpretations of the test are a perfect representation of myself. The study states that there is no automatic association of myself with the Physical words as opposed to the mental words. This implies that I prefer mental activities as opposed to the physical activities. I have never been interested in sports, and the test made me aware of this. The Gardener's tale has made me aware of the institutionalized racism and the internalized racism that I may have. The tale has made me realize that the African American community does not receive equal opportunities and resources as the white community and this has led to the current socio-economic differences between the groups (Datchi & Ancis, 2017). The institutionalized bias has caused internalized racism which has made us believe that the White community is better and has therefore reduced our ambition and pride in our race. We have come to believe that being black makes you ineligible for certain roles, which is an incorrect belief.

My beliefs have been greatly challenged by this exercise. I always used to believe that racism could only be eliminated if people were taught to embrace their differences and institutions were more tolerant of diversity. The Gardener's tale has made me realize that the only way to eliminate racism is to eliminate institutionalized racism. Institutionalized racism is where one race is provided with better resources than the other (Jackson, 2006). Eliminating institutionalized racism will eliminate personally-mediated racism where people think of each other and assume their intentions differently based on their race as well as internalized racism. If the minority groups were given similar opportunities as the whites, they would be able to succeed in life and would not be looked down upon by others. They would be ambitious and improve their socio-economic status which would serve to close the gap between the whites and the minority groups, eliminating all forms of racism. The only means to achieve equality is to provide equal resources to all people.

I have learned a lot about myself. I have learned that I do not associate physical activities with my persona. I have never been interested in physical activities, in spite of the stereotypes of African Americans and they form no part of my personality. I have also discovered that I have a personally-mediated bias. I assume the intentions of individuals based on their race. The Gardener's story has made me realize that I tend to believe that people who are white will immediately misjudge me due to my character. I believe that white people will automatically stereotype me because I am black and therefore when interacting with them, for instance, during a job interview, I am less likely to be myself or voice my opinions.

References

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Articulating your professional strengths and approach to practice

Basically, non-verbal communication mainly includes the gestures, eye contact and facial expressions that are displayed by an individual through body language (Rizvi, & Kapoor, 2010). Non-verbal communication is a very crucial aspect that greatly determines how the interviewer makes assumptions about the personality of the interviewee. Therefore, positive non-verbal communication expressions will mean that the interviewer may be impressed (Haroun, 2016). During the talk, the classmate I picked highlighted various issues regarding my non-verbal communication. The first thing that was highlighted is that I expressed an impressive posture. I was able to sit up straight or upright and I avoided slouching. This made me appear confident and interested in participating in the talk.

The second thing that was highlighted is that I was able to maintain an eye contact. I ensured that I maintained eye contact in a good way. This means that I avoided staring at my classmate in a fixed and creepy way. I could also nod and smile appropriately which was impressive. During the talk, I was able to respond to questions accordingly through my facial expressions. As highlighted, I ensured that my feet were always on the floor. This means that I avoided moving my legs up and down and therefore as a result of this I appeared confident when answering the questions my classmate asked me and talking in general. However, my classmate noted that on some occasions, I was not positioning my hands naturally. My facial expressions were impressive. I did not show any negative facial expressions such as anger or being provoked. My classmate indicated that I always appeared to be calm in a natural and friendly manner. I was also able to pay close attention during the talk. Generally, as a new professional, I was able to create a positive impression through non-verbal communication.

References

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