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Cultural Diversity Workshop

I attended the cultural diversity workshop in February 2005. I went into the class with an open mind and wanted to learn something about different cultures that I hadn’t already encountered. When I got to my class from what I saw I didn’t think that there was much diversity in it. I saw the same people that I see on a daily basis on campus; I didn’t really think that we were all that different in culture. I had a completely different outlook on the class after the day was over.

The first exercise that we did was standing up when the 2 teachers said a group that you belonged to. They started off in big categories then proceeded to smaller groups. I didn’t realize all the different religions, sexual and family backgrounds, classes, and interests that we all had. It was amazing to see the people who were the same but also very different from me. Everyone in the class was more diverse than I had ever imagined. I hadn’t thought about culture as more than someone coming from a different area of the world than me. Cultural diversity is all the differences that we have from one another.

I also learned how communication can offend others. Like the phrase, “I jewed him out of the price of that car.” I didn’t think about that phrase makes no sense and can offend a person that is Jewish. I don’t know any person who is Jewish that rips people off. So why would I say that about the culture? I also learned how to point these culturally offensive phrases out by helping others to understand why they are wrong to say using good communication skills. Instead of yelling at someone to not say that, ask questions about why they said it. They will most likely be shocked that they phrase that they use all the time can hurt someone around you. I heard the phase used so much that I didn’t stop to think about why I was saying it.
I also got a chance to speak out about wrong perceptions that others think about me and other artists. I got a chance to make others understand that artists are not what we are stereotyped as. I also got a chance to hear others talk about the correct perceptions of their “groups”. I learned a lot about stereotyping groups of people and since the class, I have thought about what I say or think about someone by just seeing their outer appearance.

Not only did I learn from the teachers that were directing the class, but from the people that there sitting in chairs next to me. I met new people that I had seen on campus but never talked to. I also met a foreign student who taught me about her culture through out private conversations and her conversations to the class. She was the only one in my class who was from out of the country and I really learned a lot from what she said about the diversity on campus and around the world.

The cultural diversity class was a great class that I will recommend for all majors. It gave me great insight to the diversity around me. It is a great chance to get to know others and their cultures. I now see that I am also culturally diverse from others also and I can broaden my horizons to others who I thought were the same as me who are maybe a little different. I will be able to use this experience in the classroom with my students to incorporate projects from other cultures in the classroom that I teach in. Cultural diversity is everywhere and I am great full that now I can enjoy all the different cultures around me.