

Amanda Dennis

Celebrating Diversity

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Diversity is all around us. We see it everyday; everywhere we go. It is as simple as the different qualities each person possesses. Diverse is defined as unlike; composed of distinct forms or qualities. While some people may look alike we are all different, and yet at the same time we are equals.

At the Celebrating Diversity Workshop we participated in many different activities to help each and every one of us understand diversity and how important it is. The workshop began with the instructors passing out a questionnaire. In order to complete this questionnaire we had to communicate with all participants in the workshop. Questions consisted of have you ever been out of the United State and where have you been. We were then to find someone in the room who had traveled outside of the U.S. This activity allowed us to get to know one another. It was a great activity that had all participants up, moving, and talking. It would be a great first week of school activity. It would allow the students to get to know each other, as well as the teacher.

After having about ten minutes to complete the questionnaire the instructors called us back together as a group. They then asked us to share our answers and what we learned. They then emphasized that we were all different. We all had and will continue to have different experiences that shape who we are. We have come from different backgrounds, which make each and every one of the participants diverse. This is exactly how it will be in a classroom. There will be twenty little faces, all coming from different places and different situations. As a teacher it will be my job to meet each of their

diverse needs and make other students aware that diversity is something to embrace.

I think that people often define diversity by a person's race or color. When in all reality, that is not the only thing that makes people diverse. In my classroom we will embrace people's differences. We can learn something from each person. Through things such as class meetings we can learn from each other. Students who have traveled to different states or countries can share their experiences, helping other students understand what it might be like there. I might have students of other cultures in my room, which can then share their heritage, which can be incorporated into social studies.

The workshop went on with individuals sharing stories. People talked about issues in their life, which made them different from other people. We also talked about how individuals felt during those times and how they dealt or coped with them. The instructors then went on to explain that our struggles shape the individuals we become. As educators it is important for us to know that each child is going through their own struggles, and we as educators can give them support and help them through some of those times. It can be a situation as small as name-calling to a family crisis. When we sign on as teachers we also sign on as a support system for those students. We are there to help them in learning and in life.

This workshop left me with lots of insight into diversity. I had never thought about it as simply as it was put. When I would think of diversity I thought of race and ethnicity when actually it is all the differences in everybody, and we all bring something extraordinary to this world.