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Diversity Workshop

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Diversity Workshop

Walking in the room to attend the Diversity Workshop, I did not know what to expect. I noticed that there were about thirty seats set up in the room, and I figured there would be more people attending this workshop. The two ladies that were in charge of the workshop were Barb Burge and Tasha Williams. Barb Burge is the Director of Social Work here at Manchester. She explained to us that workshops are important because in order to build a community, we need to be able to talk about differences and similarities in people. Tasha Williams is a 2001 Alum from Manchester. She believes workshops are important because we become more aware of different things going on in our community. After their introductions, we got started on the Diversity Workshop and it provided me with useful information I can use in everyday situations and even in the classroom.

The main insight I gained at this workshop was learning how to stop prejudicial comments and jokes while maintaining a relationship with peers. Sometimes friends or family members can make comments, or tell jokes that I feel are inappropriate and they do not even realize what they are saying bothers me. I am the type of person that will not speak up in situations like these. In most cases, I will either ignore what they said or I might laugh just because I did not know how to respond. To help the group better understand how to handle confronting someone about comments or jokes they made, we

did a role play activity. We were told to get with a partner and act out a scenario that deals with one partner making an inappropriate comment and the other partner using the correct methods of explaining to their partner that they did not like what they said. This activity was fairly awkward because partners would have to think of their own scenarios. However, this was a great learning experience. I learned that one has to “care front” instead of confront someone.

Attending this workshop opened my eyes to all the stereotyping, prejudice, and mistreatment of all groups, including those defined by gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and economic class. “We are like a salad; we are not like a melting pot.” This means that there are a lot of different combinations of people. Just because some people are different from you or your group does not make them any less than you. “We must not only learn to tolerate our differences. We must welcome them as the richness and diversity which can lead to true intelligence” (Albert Einstein). This quote from Albert Einstein basically means that being able to tolerate other people is not enough. We need to welcome and appreciate people that we see as “different”.

A change I want to make as a result of this workshop is to actually get to know someone before I make assumptions about them. This is a problem that many people have, “Judging a book by its cover”. Sometimes we see people that are different from us as bizarre. If we got to know the person before we made assumptions about them, one would see that they are very similar to us in many ways.

A way to celebrate diversity in my teaching career can be to celebrate different holidays students might practice. Teaching students information about student’s cultures will hopefully make them respect and show interest in learning more about them. If

students can not respect one another because of differences, then they will miss opportunities to get to know interesting facts about students they may not notice just by appearance.

Attending this workshop was extremely beneficial to me as an individual and as a future educator. The workshop was a great learning experience because it helped me become comfortable sharing personal experiences, and thoughts on topics with people I normally do not interact with. In order for the workshop to be successful, we needed to have a trustworthy and supportive environment; this would allow students to share topics they normally would not share with people they do not know.