Celebrating Diversity:

A New Insight

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Requirement

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Diversity is defined as ethnic variety, as well as socioeconomic and gender variety in a group, society, or institution. Before attending the Manchester College Celebrating Diversity Workshop, I didn’t realize that diversity meant so many things. The goal of the workshop was to provide a place where stereotypes, prejudices and mistreatment of groups could be discussed and ways to deal with these underlying issues. It is important to remember that you can find prejudice in any situation, job setting or community. For this reason, it was important for me to attend the workshop. The following will include ways I became involved in discussion, what new insights I learned about diversity, how my thinking has changed, and what I can do as an educator to celebrate diversity.

During the workshop, the directors made it easy to participate in activities, discussions and solutions. The first activity I was involved in required me to ask and tell personal questions about my own diversity. I never realized how different my college peers really were and it made me more comfortable for later activities by participating in the first. One particular activity I enjoyed having a part in was the “recordings” activity. We made a list of groups in society and were asked to write down the first couple of words that came to mind about each group. After this, I was amazed at how some of the common stereotypes surfaced when I thought I had blocked them out. Discussing these in a small group afterwards was refreshing to see I was not the only one. During the workshop, I strived to participate to gain the most out of the experience.

A major impact on my life has been made after talking in group circles. After listening to my peers stories concerning discrimination caused by their diversity, I have a better
understanding of what prejudice does to a person of any group. The workshop has opened my
eyes to hurt caused by calling someone “a blonde.” Something as simple as this can provoke
unnecessary hurt feelings. Jokes that used to be somewhat funny, even if on the border of
discrimination are now unacceptable. I recognize the pain and suffering a person might endure
because of a “harmless” joke. The fact is that jokes are not harmless. Sticks and stones will
break bones, and words do hurt. A newfound appreciation has been gained for people with
disabilities because of one touching story told by a classmate in the workshop.

The Celebrating Diversity Workshop was an excellent program to attend before entering
the education field. Meeting new, diverse people will be an everyday thing for me. I will meet
new teachers, students and their parents whom all have different backgrounds, likes and dislikes.
This experience has widened my knowledge of diversity so when I teach I will remember that
not all students will be able to relate to my holidays or traditions. We all have different cultures
and I want to represent and celebrate these differences. Many steps will be taken from the
workshop when creating a safe and caring classroom environment. Racial or hateful jokes of any
kind towards any group will not be tolerated. Almost inevitably, some form of discrimination
may enter the classroom but I am armed with the skills to take misinformation about a group and
turn it into understanding and appreciation. Some things I look forward to including in my
classroom are children’s books with different cultures, shapes, sizes, colors and genders. Just
celebrating or learning about one holiday seems pointless now when I think of all the children
whose may be different from mine. Posters and drawing hung in the classroom will include
various groups and diversities. Slogans will be incorporated in the classroom. An excellent idea
would include a diversity week in which the children can tell of their many important qualities,
similarities and differences.
Looking back on the Diversity Workshop, my view is that each education major should have the opportunity to participate in one. The workshop is designed to help each person grasp that everyone is part of a diverse culture with different views and opinions, which will definitely surface in the classroom. Because of this workshop, I have gained a greater respect for others no matter what race, gender, or class!