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Celebrating Diversity Workshop Paper

## Celebrating Diversity Workshop

On November 11, 2007, I attended the Celebrating Diversity Workshop on the Manchester College campus. Going into this workshop, I thought I had a handle on what diversity was and how people dealt with diversity in everyday life. Going through this workshop changed my thinking. I now realize there is more to diversity than what I thought. Diversity is all around us. There are no two people that are exactly the same; therefore, we are all different, causing diversity.

Diversity can cause problems in people's lives. People have to deal with stereotypes, prejudice, and mistreatment because of some form of diversity. When I think of diversity, I think of race, religion, economic class, physical features, and sexual orientation. We hear about situations everyday where people are mistreated because of one of these features. This workshop made me realize that there is more to diversity than these characteristics. Diversity can include gender, family roles, job, and age. I believe unless a person has a negative event in their life resulting because of diversity, they do not realize how much the prejudice and mistreatment is happening. I became aware of this in the workshop when people began to share times where they felt insecure and beat up emotionally because of mistreatment from other people. I feel fortunate to have never had a negative experience like that. I became much more sensitive toward other people's feelings during this time. I became aware of different actions and slang terms that people use, and may be unaware that they affect other people.

During this workshop, I also became aware that I too am a victim of diversity. While in college I have held a job at a food restaurant. I realized that when friends begin to take advantage of me working at this place, they are taking advantage of something I do. This can be classified as mistreatment because of diversity. During the workshop, the people who hold a job were able to stand up and say what they were thinking. We were able to tell people that we did not like it when people beg us to bring home free food. I have to work for the food and they should have to pay for it.

Diversity is a good thing if it is handled with respect. We would lead boring lives if everyone looked, acted, and said the same things all the time. I have learned to become more aware of my surroundings, actions, and sayings so I do not make any one person feel uncomfortable. I have also learned how to approach someone if they do something that makes me uncomfortable or someone else uncomfortable or hurt. I have learned to stick up for other people if they are being mistreated and hurt because of a diversity difference.

While teaching, I can help my students understand diversity and how it surrounds them every day. In lessons and decorations, I can display diversity so the students are aware of what it looks like. When I see an opportune moment to insert a mini lesson on how to handle certain situations I will. I am a teacher of all subject matter, which includes behavior, respect, and appropriate actions. My students will be shown how to respect other's differences and not mistreat them. Actions of the people that surround you can affect the way you think and act as you grow older. I want my students to be able to realize when someone is hurting someone else or themselves, and I want them to know how to handle certain situations to prevent it from happening again.