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Reflection Paper

Before taking this Social Work class, I was unaware of my options after graduation. I recently changed my major to Child and Family Studies, and although I was extremely excited about this new field, I felt overwhelmed and confused about my future after LSU. People offered me advice, insisting that I attend Graduate School to allow more possibilities for myself after graduation. Even though I highly considered the option of Graduate School, I was never completely thrilled about it. With two years until I graduate, I knew I still had time to think about my choices and different career paths. However, after being in the Social Work class for one day, my goals and desires changed. I fell in love with Social Work was after Gina, a Graduate student, talked to the class about the School of Social Work. As she told her own life story, I could relate to the confusion that she felt before finally discovering that social work was her calling. I feared that with a career in Social Work I would be required to remove children from their homes. However, after hearing the numerous possibilities one has working in this profession, I am seriously considering the idea of being a social worker. I am a passionate person, and I want to work in a field I am passionate about. I want to make a change in people's lives, work for a cause, and make an impact. I know working in Social Work will allow me to help people and make a difference.

I am certain this class has impacted my life forever. This course has not only helped me decide my future career, but it has also allowed me to reflect on myself and my beliefs. Before this class, I never had the chance to hear the feelings, concerns, and everyday struggles of people from different ethnicities and races than my own. I considered myself to value diversityand swore I was not racist, but this class has shown me that everyone is racist in some way. The only way to actually deal with your racism and try to overcome it, is to first acknowledge your biases and prejudices. At first, taking a class with the LSU football players was intimidating. However, after truly getting to know the athletes in my class, the assumptions I had of typical athletes proved to be false. The class has given me the opportunities to talk and also really listen to African Americans and Saudi Arabians. To hear these ethnic groups’ everyday struggles was mind-opening and I gained a tremendous amount of respect for both of these ethnicities.

I expected this class to be an incredible amount of work, extremely challenging, and unbearable because of the shortened length of time. Although the class required outside work and challenged me to interact with people I usually do not spend much time with, it was far from unbearable. The students, the information, and especially the teacher made the class one of my favorites here at LSU. I was most surprised by how quickly the three hours each day of class flew by. Because of my interest in the topics of study, I felt class ended so quickly. I enjoyed our class discussions the most because it gave everyone a chance to express their feelings and beliefs in a safe environment. Our class was accepting of all students, and I think everyone appreciated hearing different opinions on controversial topics, such as, race, ethnicity, and privilege. The most memorable day of class for me was sitting in a circle and discussing white privilege. Before this discussion, I did not think white privilege still existed in today’s society and I was convinced everyone had the same opportunities. However, after listening to the discussion on it, I realized that I could have not been more wrong. This opened my eyes to a whole new view on life, and I feel that I am now more culturally aware of the different types of privilege.

Not only did I learn important information in this class on how to interview and counsel others, but I also learned critical life lessons that can be applied to my everyday life. The microskills are helpful tools in communication between friends, family, and teachers. Understanding multicultural competence, the idea of respecting other’s different norms and cultures when interacting with each other. Using the attending skills to understand someone’s body language or showing appropriate eye contact are also both vital when demonstrating good active listening skills. When talking to a friend, responding with paraphrases, summaries, and encouragers are all helpful tools in showing you are truly listening and understanding what they are saying. All of the different rungs of skills on the Microskills Hierarchy can be used in my everyday personal and professional life to help me become a more cultural intentional person. I notice now when I am communicating with my roommates, I listen more carefully to what they are saying; I also try to show I am paying attention by using my attending skills and the basic listening sequence. I maintain eye contact, paraphrase what they say, and reflect their feelings to demonstrate I care about their stories. As my roommate was telling me about her day, yesterday, I decided to practice my interviewing and counseling skills on her. I asked her open-ended questions to fully understand her day, maintained eye contact, and replied with encouraging comments and paraphrases. I felt I truly was listening and responding to her story and not just passively going through the motions. Overall, this class has provided me with the skills to be a better communicator.