

Cultural Diversity Capstone Experience

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### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the semester I attended MLK day and volunteered as a greeter. I volunteered for three hours on January 20, 2020. I have never attended a Powwow before, so it was an interesting experience for me to observe. Watching the Powwow really gave me a lot of insight in the Native American life. I really enjoyed volunteering and watching the Powwow.

On January 29<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup> I got to learn all about Bloody Sunday. My thoughts about the first Bloody Sunday Forum event that I attended was that it was a very intense movie to watch. While watching it though I learned a lot about Northern Ireland. I also learned a lot about what happened that very day during the March. I thought this movie was really good and it taught me that Northern Ireland is not at all what I thought it was. The second event took a lot for me to watch. This documentary was about people of Northern Ireland. Watching the documentary, you can tell that these people have been through a lot. They are people who have suffered great loss and yet still want to find peace with the people who have taken their loved ones from them. I really enjoyed watching this documentary as it brought so much insight on who these people really are. The third event was a great experience for me as it brought more resolution of Northern Ireland. Johnny Clark talked about God and his perspectives on him. As Clark stated, "God is found in our enemy." When he said this a talked more about it, it than made more sense about the documentary. Even if the person that we do not like or the person who has done us wrong we should love them anyway because they should be loved like our family. Clark talked about how Father Jerry did this so well. People need to try and be more like Father Jerry and the world will be an amazing place.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> I went to my after-school program and got to teach and observe students from the ages of five to twelve. These students attend a very low-income school, and all come from different backgrounds. Some are boys, girls, Native American, white, Latino, African American, Catholic, Lutheran, rich, poor and the list goes on. There is so much diversity in this school and it amazes every day I go there to work how much these children have gone through in such little time in their life.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> I went and observed my sisters-in-law classroom at Mary Stark Elementary. This is another low-income school and she also has a lot of diversity in her classroom. It amazed me how many students she had that were not just different in the color of skin, gender, and religion, but also the difference in hearing and speech impairments. She has one student in her class who is very different and stands out from all of her other students and that is her student who is deaf. It amazed me so much how her class had accepted this deaf little girl into their community and were learning sign language for her just so they could have a conversation with her. This was one of my favorite practicum observations that I got to see.

On February 25, 2020 I attended Saint Bernard Mission School at Standing Rock Reservation. Being able to go to this school and see a Montessori program was an amazing experience for me. I was so glad that I was able to attend I learned so much being able to go. I wish I could have gone again for more experience in a Montessori program.



Being able to experience all of these I think has made me a better teacher and I hope I am able to help in any way that I can. Throughout this essay I will address my experiences and observations in terms of demographics, environmental adaptations, instructional adaptations and the parameters beyond the classroom.

### **Demographics**

The demographics that I was able to see according to age were anywhere from five to eighty years old. Being able to see such a wide range in the age group made it so great for me because I was able to see more than just one age group. Another demographic that I was able to experience was gender. I was able to see woman, men, boys, and girls from all kinds of places. I was also able to see ethnicity in my practicum hours. I got to see types of ethnicity in Native Americans, African Americans, and Caucasians. This was amazing experience for me because I grew up in a small town and was not around a lot of ethnicity. So, being able to see this brought me out of shell and opened me up to new ideas. I also got to experience some socioeconomic background at some of the places I observed. Most of the students that I work with at my after-school program come from low-income families. It was hard for me to hear from my students that sometimes they do not get a lot to eat at night or that they might be moving because their

dad got thrown in jail and they cannot afford to live where they are now. Hearing all this brought a lot of sadness onto me and I tried my best to help them in every way possible that I could. Being able to be in this class really opened up my mind to things that I never thought could happen in life.



### **Environmental Adaptations**

The environment in each observation that I went to was different. At the powwow it seemed more like a free spirit, happy kind of place. At Bloody Sunday it seemed more like a sad environment but very informational. At my after-school program the environment is very welcoming, and the students are always very enthusiastic to be there. When I went and observed at Mary Stark Elementary the teacher had a heart on the back wall that was made from handprints. I asked her about it, and she said she does it at the beginning of the year each year. She puts on their saying our class and has the students go and put their hands in paint and put it on the canvas in the shape of heart. I think this really showed that her classroom was very loving and a family. At Saint Bernard Mission School, the environment was different for me as I have never been to a reservation school before. It was not much different from any other school they were just as welcoming and kind as the other schools that I went and observed at.



### **Instructional Adaptations**

The most instructional adaptation that I did throughout my practicum hours was in my after-school program. After being in this class for a while it taught me new ways on how to teach students with diversity. This really helped me with my students at the after-school program because I was able to interact with my diverse students. Growing up in a small town I did not experience a lot of diversity so being able to take this class really helped me with my students because I was not really sure on how to act around them. I was able to better communicate with my students than I was before I started taking this class. Taking this class has really improved my teaching skills.

### **Parameters of the Classroom**

Beyond the parameters of the classroom I went to a powwow and the Bloody Sunday week. Being able to see this point of view outside the classroom was an amazing experience for me. I have never been to a powwow so being able to attend one was incredible to me. It was definitely not what I was expecting, but it was a great experience and I hope I will be able to attend another one in the future. I did not know a lot about Bloody Sunday so being able to attend events throughout that week was interesting to me. I learned a lot about Bloody Sunday that I did

not know about. Going outside the classroom to learn about other cultures are great experiences and I hope I can continue to learn more about other cultures in the future.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I have really enjoyed getting to see all the cultural diversity in today's society. I envision my experiences at these places have added more diversity to my background and will make me a better teacher. I think that the places that I have attended was good for me in learning about other cultures. I was glad that I was able to go to the places that I attended because I think it has made me understand diversity a lot more. Because of this class and the hours that I put in I think I will be able to get to know my students more on a personal level. Being able to take this class has taught me ways to understand my students background better and I think this will benefit me in the future.