

In this class, I acquired knowledge in the classroom and also in the institution that I worked on. The learning process was complementary. In the classroom, I learned about compassion, social responsibility, justice, and diversity, and then, I was able to apply the learned material in a local institution doing my learning-service.

At the beginning of the semester, Dr. Gomez asked the class to define how each of us identify ourselves. It was a difficult question and I think that it still is. Personally, I did not know what to say. The first response that I thought of was to identify myself by my name and nationality. Along with that question, the professor made an activity. He asked the students to partner with another student and just look at each other and make up a story based on how that person looked like. With this activity, I learned that how a person identifies is very different on how other people sees the same person. Sadly, stereo types can interfered and instead of judging a person individually, they are judge depending on the group that they belong to.

I learned that in order to criticize a person, one has to know that person and be aware of his/her situation because no one wants to be in a position that is not privilege. For example, homeless people do not want to be homeless because they like to, they are there because they had some type of problem. There are so many social problems that they all could be facing, like mental illness, unemployment, and depression. Before this class, I was not aware of this but now I feel empathy towards people that are going through a difficult time.

At the same time, I learned that I can help to change the social problems that exist in my community. As a college student, I have resources that other people in my community do not have. I took advantage of those resources and went out to the community to share my knowledge. I worked in an elementary school. I worked with disadvantage first grade students.

They are victims of the teacher shortage that exist in Monterey County. On kinder they did not have a permanent teacher. All year long, they went from substitute to substitute and they were not ready for first grade. I felt socially responsible for their situation, so I worked with their current teacher to help them to be ready for second grade. I do not want that the students get discourage in school because the fact that they are not on grade level is not their fault. They are very intelligent, but they did not have the resources needed to succeed in school.

One of the topics that they class stresses is diversity. In this class, I had the privilege to have classmates with a different cultural background. I had the privilege to meet a Colombian-Japanese classmate who grew up in Japan. Through her, I learned that as humans we have so many things in common not only that we belong to the same race. She talked about the problems that she could identify in Japan and those are very similar to the ones that we are facing in the United States. I learned that the only thing that makes us different are physical characteristics and a geographical location.

During the class, I also learned about Hispanic cultures through reading, investigation, and personal experiences. We read articles about the Hispanic culture, and we participated in this event called the Big Read. We read a book called Sol, Piedra y Sombras. The book has short stories written by Hispanic authors. The stores teaches us about the historical events of their country, and the social problems that they were facing in that era. In groups we read a story and presented to the class. I read a story that was focus in the problems after the Mexican revolution.

My language skills also improve because of this class. I did not know how to write a critical essay and I learned how to do it in this class. My vocabulary also improved. My verbal skills also improve. To practice our language skill, we had discussions in class every day. I

participated in a debate and I was able to present my arguments clearly and was able to defend my arguments.

In conclusion, this class helped me improved my knowledge in Spanish language and Hispanic cultures.