

**Cross Cultural Paper**

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Ed 424 – Geidel

October 31, 2011

Throughout my time at Concordia, I have been exposed to all sorts of diversity around me. My experiences range from being placed in a classroom in Seward, to travelling to Central America to serve and teach. All my experiences have helped shape who I am and my perspective of the world. God has blessed me by providing me with opportunities to interact with his children and see how special we all are.

While I was in the class, "Introduction to Education," I participated in a poverty simulation. My character was a teenage girl who was living at home with her child, brother and father. I had the responsibilities of taking my child to daycare and getting to school on time. Sometimes I had to take care of my little brother. I didn't think it would be that difficult, but it just seemed like there were never enough hours in the day. When I was at school, I was just preparing my plan of action and route for after school to make the most of my bus money and get everything done before businesses closed. I always felt rushed and stressed out. Although there were resources to help out, I struggled even to take advantage of them. This simulation helped me experience a circumstance very different from my own. I better understand the difficulties life can throw out you and how it makes it practically impossible to learn trivial things in the classroom. My future students can be from upper, middle, and lower-class families. No matter what their financial status is, they are valuable members of my classroom. It becomes my job as their teacher to provide a warm, stable environment to help meet their needs and teach them appropriately.

The classroom I was assigned for my teacher aiding experience for Psychology of Exceptionality was Mrs. Gray's first grade Title I reading with six students who are on

the lower end of the spectrum in reading. Reading Mastery is used at Seward Elementary, and the difference between Title I and the other reading groups was the pace. This class just went at a much slower pace than the other classes. I understand that pace can be differentiated for struggling students, but I believe that these students might be more successful with more attention to their specific needs. Content, process, and product are all capable of differentiated to help the student achieve at maximum potential. I learned that it is imperative to keep high expectations for your students, while meeting them where they are at and pushing them to get there.

I arranged my own learning experience for Teaching Diverse Learners. This summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Guatemala on a mission trip. I had never quite been that far away from home, and I was a little nervous. This trip is the highlight of my cross-cultural experiences. While in Guatemala, I taught Vacation Bible School and volunteered at a nutritional center and a day care center. I worked with people from all ages: nine month old babies to adults, teaching them about God's love for them. I was blown away by the amazing relationships formed, in spite of a language barrier. My adventure to Guatemala was truly a wonderful experience. I met fantastic people (who ended up teaching me more than I think I taught them), ate different and delicious food, saw more of God's beautiful creation, and gained a wealth of knowledge.

My philosophy of education is continuously growing and expanding because of these activities and many others. Differences of those in my classroom will be taken into consideration as I prepare lesson plans. James Banks' theory on education is helpful for professional educators as an outline for structuring the classroom in a way that is beneficial to all students. This method promotes critical thinking while collaborating and

cooperating with other students. My classroom will function as a family. We will work together for the benefit of others. As the teacher, it is my job to integrate content from a variety of sources, present material in various ways, utilize different teaching and learning strategies, and encourage broadening perspective. Since people are unique and different from one another, implementing strategies in line with Banks' theory is advantageous to all.

No matter how different we seem from each other, we are still all God's precious children. I realize we have our differences, and that is what makes us special. It is my goal as a teacher to see my students as Christ sees them, loving them no matter what. I will do my best to do whatever I can to meet them where they are and help them grow from there. Differentiated instruction will be regularly practiced in my class so as to make the learning experience applicable and personal to my students.