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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how one Educational Psychology professor prepares predominantly white, female, middle-class student teachers for experiences with diverse learners by providing a learning task or activity that engages them in new experiences with someone different from themselves. This requires them to integrate principles related to teaching a diverse population of students as discussed in the an educational psychology text. The activity meets class goals in a personally meaningful manner. Students can choose from a variety of experiences related to: culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race, nationality, social/economic class, and intellectual/physical ability. Students write summary reports describing how the experience affected the way they thought and felt about themselves, how they felt about the activity, and specific educational psychology principles regarding individual and group differences covered in the course as they related to their experiences. Students have reflected on many issues of diversity through this activity. They have spoken of developing better cognitive understanding of diversity and how the topics of individual and group differences covered in the course were relevant. They have shown that principals of diversity, multiculturalism, and humanistic psychology discussed in class have personal meaning in their interactions with others. Students have developed a more humanistic perspective of teaching and positive attitude about learner diversity. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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Teaching about Multicultural and Diversity Issues from an Humanistic Perspective

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Introduction

The issue of diversity among learners, discussed as both individual and group differences, is a common core topic explored in most undergraduate educational psychology survey courses. It is a topic which most educational psychology textbooks devote several chapters (see Figure 1 for examples). As the demographics of the student population continue to change in the schools of the United States, and as education becomes more global, it is appropriate that the topic of diversity and multiculturalism is covered in depth. This is especially true since the demographic characteristics of the teachers in our schools continue to remain fairly consistent (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a, p. 80).

The percentage of U.S. school-age students of color from more diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds will continue to increase (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999b, p. 60). Also, each year more students are being classified as having special needs (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999c, p. 66). These culturally diverse and classified students are disproportionally from lower SES households residing in urban environments (Karlin, 2000). In addition, due to the reporting of more acts of violence, the issue of sexual orientation in secondary schools is coming out of the closet and beginning to get the attention it deserves, as well as the issue of gender harassment at all grade levels (e.g., see National Education Association, 1999). Yet, the population of teachers remains mostly white, female, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, from a European heritage, and possessing typical cognitive and physical abilities. If teachers and students are to engage in an effective teaching-learning exchange, then pre-service teachers need to learn about these differences and engage in experiences that promote self-reflection about their personal behaviors, beliefs, and values and how they influence their interactions with "others." This learning process is not as easy as it

sounds for several reasons based on what we understand about human development and the psychology of learning.

Literature Review

Some scholars theorize that humans, through evolutionary development, have retained a "primal" survival tendency that focuses humans' attention to the differences observed in other humans (and non-humans) along with a level of suspicion of "others" (e.g., see Harris, 1998). Humans seem to have to make a conscious effort to develop a tolerance (as well as an appreciation) of diverse behaviors, beliefs, and values between groups. However, humans, having the ability to reason and consciously manipulate their behaviors, beliefs and values, can learn or "be educated" about how the diversity among groups can be a benefit to one's culture.

In addition, as educational psychologists, we know that from a constructivist framework, we tend to view the world and how it operates from the cognitive schemes we construct through our life experiences (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1998; Wittrock, 1992). We know what we experience. We formulate our beliefs and values and the manner in which we interact (or not interact) with others based upon what we experience throughout our life. We assimilate, differentiate, and classify people into "groups" because it is more cognitively efficient. The fewer experiences that we have with others different from ourselves, however, the more reconstruction of our cognitive schemes is probably necessary when we encounter others different than those we have normally interacted. We have all experienced the initial discomfort of being with someone different than ourselves if we have had little experience with that difference; be it being the only white person at a professional meeting, walking through a low SES neighborhood where we teach, giving a congratulatory hug to someone who just received

tenure and we know is homosexual, or being immersed in a foreign culture during a sabbatical and not being able to speak or understand the language spoken around you.

Often we learned tolerance and appreciation of differences in a "trial by fire" manner. We found ourselves in some of the situations as described above, did some self-reflection, and freely choose to push through the feelings of discomfort and unreasoned assumptions we had about an individual and group, and engaged in a new experience. This in turn helped to overcome our "primal fears" and/or misinformation and lead to a reconstruction of our cognitive schemes about an individual or group.

Although cognitive understanding of the benefits of diversity is important, in many ways, it is the affective area of development that must really be addressed. Humanistic psychologists and educators have been the ones who have most often addressed this area dealing with beliefs, attitudes and values (Freiberg, 1999). I find it interesting that almost all current educational psychology texts minimally discuss the importance of addressing affective learning objectives and in recent years deleted almost all coverage devoted to humanistic perspectives of learning (see Figure 2). [Although Maslow's theory of needs commonly gets a brief discussion in the motivation chapter.] This is not surprising since the affective area of development is considered more difficult to directly affect in teaching and certainly more difficult to measure change accurately and reliably.

We also know that affective outcomes often take a long time to develop and are resistant to change (Ruggiero, 1999; Wagner & Sherwood, 1969). In fact, the research on attitude change seems to indicate that the best way to change one's attitude is to first change one's behavior (Mager, 1984; Zimbardo & Ebbesen, 1970). Through initiation of new behaviors with others, cognitive dissonance arises between one's preconceived beliefs and one's direct experiences,

which promotes a change in attitudes. However, if the new behavior results in too much dissonance, then instead of moving one to a more tolerant attitude or belief, it may in fact entrench one in the original belief. Thus, an experience that is different, but not threatening, seems best in creating a more tolerant view of diversity among groups and individuals.

When teaching a survey course in educational psychology, I structure coverage of the course content, as well as my own instructional strategies, on an Aptitude x Treatment x Outcome instructional model based on Bloom's (1976) model of school learning (see Figure 3). The model suggests that teachers need to be clear on the cognitive and affective outcomes [O] that they want students to achieve, the cognitive and affective entry characteristics of the students [A], and the instructional strategies and learning tasks [T] in which the teacher and the students will engage to achieve the outcomes.

As a teacher-educator, I want to integrate into my educational psychology course for pre-service teachers at least one learning task or activity that would help students to engage in a new experience with someone different than themselves. I want to have students engage in a behavior different than they would normally with someone different than themselves. Hopefully through reflection they might experience some cognitive dissonance which might begin changing the preconceived attitude or belief that they have learned or developed. I want students to reflect on how the experience influences them personally, as well as professionally, and how it connects to the course discussions on diversity, multiculturalism, and viewing teaching from an humanistic perspective.

Subjects (entry characteristics)

The pre-service teachers at The College of Saint Rose are a fairly homogenous group. In the undergraduate educational psychology class (EPY350) that all pre-service teachers are

required to take, the students are mostly white (~95%; most descendants of immigrants from Western & Eastern Europe), female (~85%), middle-class (~90%), Christian (~95%, predominately Catholic), from rural and suburban New York state communities (~80%). More specifically, in the 35 sections of EPY350 that I have taught over the last 12 years, I have had 769 students of which only 18 were students of color (2.3%). In general, they have had very little personal contact with others from different backgrounds, yet will soon be teaching in schools with large numbers of students with different personal and cultural characteristics than their own.

As the instructor of this course, I have some understanding of students general perceptions, because my pre-college experiences and background are similar. I am white (3rd generation German), raised in a small town in a middle-class, Catholic family. In my entire K-12 schooling experience, there were only two students of color in my classes. Although I attended a larger urban university, there were very few persons of color in any of my education classes. My first years of teaching occurred in urban secondary schools servicing predominantly low SES student populations in which approximately 90% were African-American with the other 10% primarily white students from families who were migrants from rural Appalachia. One year I was the only Caucasian math teacher of a staff of nine math teachers. [The other eight teachers were African-American.] Because of the lack of previous personal experience with others different from myself, I experienced a certain level of "culture shock" and was a less effective teacher than I care to admit. However, I believe this has given me a personal understanding of how important it is to prepare the pre-service students I teach for the students they will find in their future classrooms.

Affective Learning Outcomes

I want the students in my educational psychology classes to achieve not only cognitive outcomes (content knowledge) related to diversity and multicultural issues, but also affective outcomes related to their beliefs, attitudes, and values they hold about others different than themselves. Based on principles of confluent education (Brown, 1975), I try to integrate the cognitive understanding of educational psychology principles with the affective components related to them.

Procedures (instructional strategies and learning task)

As previously mentioned, a core concept taught in educational psychology survey courses is the need to address individual and group differences in learning and student/teacher interactions. Differences in intelligence, physical abilities, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, race, and social/economic class can all influence the teaching-learning exchange. If viewed from a humanistic psychological perspective, this means that as instructors of educational psychology, we make our pre-service teachers more "humanistic" if we can help them find the uniqueness in each human that they teach, and use that uniqueness to foster learning for each and every student. In order for pre-service teachers to develop a deeper understanding about the values and beliefs that they hold about others, and how those beliefs and attitudes can influence their perspectives and behaviors towards others, a personal experience with someone or a group different than themselves is required. This experience becomes a way for them to begin to reflect in a personal manner on how they might teach others different from themselves. This is the purpose of the attached activity (Appendix A).

The activity attempts to achieve three major goals. First, it attempts to expose students to a humanistic view of psychology. Although the majority of the concepts of the course are

presented from a cognitive framework, issues of interpersonal relations as they affect learning, motivation, and evaluation, are also addressed from a humanistic perspective. Second, the activity requires students to integrate principles related to teaching a multicultural and diverse population of students as discussed in an educational psychology text. Third, the activity attempts to meet the first two goals in a personally meaningful manner. The effectiveness of this activity has been determined by the summary reports that students submit indicating how the experience affected them in the way they think and feel about others, as well as about the activity itself. The summary also requires students to discuss specific educational psychology principles regarding individual and group differences that are core concepts covered in the course as they relate to the student's experience.

Results

As noted on the activity sheet (Appendix A), students can choose from a wide range of "diverse" experiences. I have grouped below portions of the reports[1] that students submitted to illustrate the degree of affective change and cognitive learning that some of the students experienced through this exercise.

"Religious/Cultural"

- I went to visit Bev ... at a special education preschool to say hello and talk about Chanukah. ... Chanukah is not the most important holiday in the Judaism religion, but it is one of the most associated with this religion. The reason it is most associated with Chanukah is because it is the closest holiday the Jewish religion has to Christmas. ... I thought talking to Bev was a much better experience than any book or website could have taught me. The experiences that she talked about with her children and her husband made it more personal to me. It was not like I was learning about a religion or a holiday, but I felt like I was learning more about Bev as a person. I also believe that his woke me up to how there are so many different religions, orientations, and ethnicities that to try to mold people to fit into one calendar is unreasonable and illogical. I grew up Catholic and when we would do Christmas trees in art or Easter baskets I never thought anything of it. However, I am sure that one child probably did. Maybe this is why State and Religion are suppose to stay separate. All students should be able to identify themselves in the school setting. Maybe this is the humanistic side of me and Snowman and Biehler, but in order for students to be confident in themselves they have to feel safe and loved. The security that these students receive not only from the family, but also from their classmates and teachers,

[1] Reports have been edited for brevity [...], but not for grammar or sentence structure. Students posted their reports for other students in the class to read on a web-based discussion board developed for the class.

should be that not everyone is the same and no one should ever have to feel insecure about who they are. [Lalena - white, female, Catholic, Italian-American]

- The speaker [was] Morris. … His family was Jewish. Art and music were his life. … On November 15, 1940, the ghetto where Morris and his family were taken was sealed. … Morris was later assigned to a military unit in the Warsaw Airport. There he proved to the commander that he could write in calligraphy. He made designs for the soldiers' attire … and in return received bread and cheese. … German officials decided that there were too many Jews and began killing them off. They were brought to the sealed ghettos, burned and poisoned to death. However, Morris was brought to the German commandant to his headquarters and asked to paint a picture of his family. He had heard of the work Morris had done previously for other German officers. In return, he … told him that he would survive because he proved to be useful. Years later, Morris came to study in the US … becoming a graphic artist. Morris had a way of speaking to the audience that forced us to live this terrible journey that he went through. I was appalled at some of the descriptions he gave telling how many of the Jewish people were "done away with." I imagined myself with the German commandant waiting to hear what it was that he desired and wondering if I would live to see tomorrow. Drawing and calligraphy, especially as a child, have been of interest to me and this gave me an even greater opportunity to place myself in Morris' shoes during this time of horror. … I continue to think about Morris' experience and it helps me to overcome some of the daily obstacles that I encounter. … I … realize that I have it easy in comparison to his life. Finally, this idea of reflecting back on particular memories or experiences has a lot to do with constructivism. Based on our past, we form our own understanding of how something must be done. Meaningful learning is more likely to occur if we can relate what we already know to new information. We are constantly adding and removing information when we experience something new (i.e., when I attended Morris' lecture, my ideas and beliefs about the Holocaust changed significantly). [Jessica – white, female, Christian]
- I attended a presentation at Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary … titled "From Generation to Generation: The Challenges of Teaching Values, Discipline, and Freedom in our Society." The panel members consisted of two St. Rose students, a former Albany High School Principal, a Jewish Rabbi who is affiliated with a Jewish school, a Methodist Reverend, a Muslim woman who teaches at an Islamic school, and a moderator who was Jewish. … Although I didn't learn very much about teaching values to children from this debate, I did learn the importance of having respect and consideration for the students that I will be teaching and for their religious beliefs or heritage. Listening to the Islamic woman explain how she felt and was treated in the public school reinforced what we learned in class. It is important for teachers to be educated about their students and their backgrounds and to promote appreciation and respect for different cultures, races and religions. This is referred to as multicultural education (Snowman & Biehler, 2000). Respect for all students did seem to be a common belief among the panel members… [Kirsten – white, female, Christian]
- Often times, individuals are put into situations that are new to them. Maybe it's being on the other side of town or going to an international cultural event. For me, however, it was being an active participant on a multicultural debate about teaching values in school. … I was a participant on a panel entitled "From Generation to Generation: The Challenge of Teaching Values, Discipline and Freedom in Our Society." This panel's intent was to take in account several cultural views about teaching values in school. … At the actual discussion, I met the other panelist, a Muslim woman who taught at an Islamic school, but was brought up in a Catholic school. Even then, the comfort level was gone due to the fact there were seating issues because Muslim women cannot sit next to married men. … As to the cultural aspect, I have learned as teachers, we need to remember to present all cultures and make all of our students feel comfortable in the classroom. We must learn about other cultures and be willing to allow others to teach us about subjects we as teachers do not know about. We cannot be ignorant teachers. However, what I have learned the most is that, as teachers, we need to nurture our student and children to respect other people's cultures. We must not impose our own values, but we must be models for our children so that they so learn how to live ethically in today's society. [Allison – white, female, Catholic]
- Normally when we go to visit my friends we do not see the Amish around. Normally, the women are busy cooking, canning, cleaning, and other light farm help, such as milking the cows. The children are at school or helping with the chores. The men spend their days making wooden rockers, farming, hunting, fishing, and making rugs. They are usually busy from sun up till sun down. I found it hard to believe that this family was home and relaxing. I … had a very interesting discussion with the Amish. … The Amish children start school at about 5 years old. They attend a 1 room schoolhouse. There is an Amish woman that teaches grade 1 through 8. The teacher has no schooling past the 8th grade. She has no high school or college degree. The school year begins in September and ends in May. In October the students have a week or two off for harvesting. Once the child starts school they are considered old enough for farm help and household chores. The Amish people speak

only German. When they start school they learn English. In school they are taught only the bare basics like reading, writing and arithmetic. … I found that the Amish were really a great deal different than I had expected. I thought they just did not like the modern world and crimes. I assumed that his was the reason they had chosen to live such a sheltered, secluded lifestyle. I did not realize that they lived this way because of their religion, beliefs and heritage, just as we live the way we do because of our beliefs and background. Since I have learned a little about the Amish people I have realized that different cultures, social classes and groups of people have different levels of emphasis they put on education. After seeing how different groups of people have different ideas, I will be able to understand where the children are coming from better than I would have before. If I am in a situation that I have a different background or belief I feel that I will be more open minded and caring about their ideas and beliefs. I think that I will be less likely to jump to conclusions than I would have before because I can see how much people really can be different. [Terrie – white, female, Christian]

- For my experience, I went to attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. I … wanted to know some things about them, and why they did not celebrate holidays in the classroom. They also never participated in birthdays and after school activities. Therefore, I attended a Sunday meeting. … I was well received and everyone was very friendly. I was introduced to some 'elders' (like a head priest) and told them why I was attending. They were very cordial and excited. One offered to talk to me after the meeting to talk about whatever questions that I would have. This meeting started with a song and a prayer. Then there was a talk entitled "Satan's wicked system of things." The talk was about how morals have depleted and how people should be on the watch so their own morals would not be depleted also. The speaker had some newspaper articles about certain events that happened in our town. Each of these articles had a moral that was not followed. Spiritual strength was preached throughout the talk. … there was another song and then a Watchtower study. ... The Watchtower was in a question and answer format where anybody could answer. It was very interesting to see all the young and old participating in this discussion. … I asked … why they did not celebrate certain holidays. … it was not in their belief and since they modeled what Jesus did when he was on earth, they did not celebrate any of the holidays. … It was nice to go to a different religion and to see what they believed. I enjoyed the conversation … I feel now that if I ever came across a Jehovah's Witness in class that I would understand how not make them feel out of place because they did not celebrate holidays or birthdays. This I believe will help my career because now I have a small understanding of Jehovah's Witnesses and that will make it easier when I come across one when I am teaching. When coming across one of these students it will be important to give them a safety feeling and not make them feel left out in the classroom. It will be important because like with Karim in Case #3 children need to feel safe and not out of place in the classroom. This would be a humanistic approach to these children and an approach that would satisfy Maslow's basic needs. The needs that I will focus on would be Belongingness and Love. I could possibly do this by making them feel more comfortable when a birthday or holiday comes up. This Experience was, in my belief, a valuable asset to understanding a new religion that I may come across as a teacher. [Kevin, white, Italian-American, Catholic]
- … I attended services at Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church … with a co-worker. … The first thing I noticed when we walked in was the lack of pews, or any other kind of seating. The women and men were separated.… All the women wore dresses or skirts; my friend explained to me that married women wear hats or scarves. On the walls are several pictorial representations of icons, and on a table in front of the altar there is an icon stand with one picture on it, this icon is blessed during communion at the end of the service. Most of the service was conducted in Russian.... The priests wore very ornamental gold and white robes. Since the service was mostly in Russian, I had to quiz my co-worker afterward. She explained that the first part of the service is essentially the same every week and the sermon at the end changes weekly. The theme this week dealt with Lent, and the physical and spiritual experience of fasting. … I found it interesting that priests in this church are required to wear a beard and that they wear their habit (a black robe) at all times. My co-worker told me the beard is worn to more closely resemble Christ, and that the length of the priests' hair is longer for the same reason. The length of a priest's hair also indicates how much contact that priest has with the public (the monks, obviously, have longer hair). It is also interesting to note that this branch of the Russian Orthodox Church uses a different calendar than other Christian religions. So, the date that holidays like Christmas and Easter are celebrated is later. As a speech-language pathologist, I would need to be aware there is a community of people who speak Russian. This would be important to know during an evaluation of a client, especially a child. The use of more than one language needs to be noted so as not to confuse a difference (the influence of a second or multiple languages) with a disorder. In the school, I could more easily see why it might be important to know that a student practices this religion. Due to the different calendar, I would expect the student to miss a day or two of school in January for Christmas and possibly the Monday following the Russian Orthodox Easter. My co-worker also pointed out that funeral services in this church are prolonged events that span three days, so a

student would be expected to be out of school for that period of time. She also related to me a personal story of when she was in second grade. Her teacher told her that the following year the Russian Orthodox Church was going to change its calendar, so everyone would be celebrating Christmas on the same day. The teacher was not aware of the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church consists of more than one branch; my co-worker's branch was not one that changed its calendar. From a humanistic perspective, this teacher was clearly lacking the ability to consider the student's point of view. My co-worker related to me that she felt very upset and confused by her teacher's comment. She (my co-worker) also told me that some people occasionally challenge her on such issues as saints; some saints are shared with the Catholic Church, some differ. Any teacher or SLP should be sensitive to the fact that different people who come from different religious backgrounds will follow different traditions and may have quite differing beliefs. [Cyndi, white, female, Catholic]

"Cultural/Ethnicity/Race"

- ... when I heard that we were going to have to do an assignment on multiculturalism and diversity I had no idea what to do. After looking around on campus and asking around I found a club that would directly deal with cultural diversity. This was Spectrum. This club which consisted of twenty or so members all from different backgrounds, among them were Latinos, African Americans, and various other nationalities ... This group mainly focused on having different events on campus that directly deals with cultural diversity. This year in particular they hosted Cultural Diversity Day in the fall. And had taken part in the Asian night ... this week ... they were discussing a new event that they wanted to prepare for. This would be an African American dinner and celebration. .... They discussed what types of food they would like to serve. Also they went over some of the dances they would do ... I entered the conversation and explained to them that I knew very little about other cultures, and that I would love to go to one of their events if I knew about them. ... by sitting there and talking to this group of people I learned a great deal about how hard it is to plan events that promote diversity because many people do not want to attend. But in all, I learned how people feel about certain issues. As an example we talked a little about how African Americans are treated by police. We talked in great detail about how people are only judged by the color of their skin. In the long run we found that we all thought the same in that a person should be judged on character not by skin color. Plus after a while I did not feel is if I was an observer in this meeting but that I was an actual member and could help promote cultural diversity on our campus. ... by the end of the meeting I was relaying ideas to the group about doing another Cultural Diversity Day in the spring as well, because it should not just be celebrated once a year. Since I went to the meeting two weeks ago, I have since been to two more meetings. In the long run, I am attending these meetings because I am first meeting new people, but most importantly I am learning more about other cultures that I might not have learned about because of my close-mindedness. Also for the future I know that multiculturalism and diversity can not be just be celebrated once a year, differences must be celebrated everyday. [Liz, white, female]
- I interviewed a friend that is Asian on her experiences throughout her education that dealt with racial issues in school. Kristine was born in the Philippines and at a very young age moved to Queens, New York. Throughout grammar school she attended a private Catholic school; Kindergarten through 8th coed and 9th-12th all girls. Kristine's worst time during her school years because of her race, was grades 2-8. Almost all the students in Kristine's school were white, Irish-Catholics; there was maybe one Italian and her. During these six years is when racism was really directed at her and she felt like the object of ridicule. When Kristine mentioned that a lot of name calling occurred I asked what the teacher's reaction was to that. She said that they did nothing and she knew that the teacher's knew what was going on and could never understand why they did not do anything about it. After looking back at all the times both the students and teachers made her cry, she feels that the teachers probably felt the same way as the students. I also brought up whether the teachers devoted anytime to multicultural activities. Because it was a Catholic school, it is obvious that Catholicism was the center of their studies. It was also aimed toward the middle class white family. Everything else was pretty much ignored and led to her not having very much interested in school. Saint Patrick's Day was a big celebration and everyone was involved, but Black History Month or Women's History Month was not even brought up. It was not until Kristine went to college when she focused on her schooling in women's studies. This study deals a lot with negating racism, homophobia, religious issues, etc. She wants to help people get through or past some of these issues. This experience was very new to me. Throughout my life I have only had a few friends that differed in race and they were really only acquaintances. I met Kristine four years ago and she is now one of my best friends. Her culture/ background plays a huge role in who she is and I have always known that, but I have never had a real conversation with her about how it affected her growing up. It made me look at her and her life in

such a different light. … I learned that as a teacher I am going to have to be completely aware of any kind of discrimination, whether it is by the students, other teachers, or even me. Sometimes it may be completely unintentional, but those times are what we need to be careful to not let happen. Every single person has a particular background that is important to them. Whether they show it or not, it is important as a teacher to include everyone. … mentioned in Snowman & Biehler (2000) is the humanistic approach (p.353). This is when the teacher teaches in a way to fulfill the needs, values, or emotions of the student. Using these approaches in Kristine's case would have allowed the other students to learn more about different cultures which would hopefully lead to more respect for them and their peers. [Leia, white, female]

"Cultural/Social Class"

- On the cruise, my family and I … docked … on the island of St. Marteen. The native people of this island were black, had an accent, and spoke broken, not so clear English. Some of the native people owned the small, cluttered stores, while others owned, ran, or worked in more upscale stores. … Some natives didn't sell products, but instead, offered services such as taking you on a tour of the island, braiding your hair, ore reading your palm. … When my family and I took a tour of the island, I noticed there were the have and have-nots, just like here in the US. As we started at the bottom of the hilly island, the housing consisted of two or three room cement houses with no windows and a tarp put in place of a roof. As you drove us the twisty, windy roads, the houses became more elaborate with actual roofs, windows, and a marble stairway leading to the front door, a balcony, and statues in front of the house. Some of the natives were only interested in trying to sell you something, but quite a few would talk to you and try to have a conversation as they told you about the history, culture, traditions, politics, and economics of their island. … I learned from this experience that one can't just look at what's around a person to judge the character of that person. Finally, I learned that every culture is unique with its own values, beliefs, customs, and rituals. It's culture that helps to unite people and we should respect and appreciate different cultures for the special things they have to offer. … This experience and what I learned from it will definitely help me in my future career as an elementary education teacher. First, as immigrant and foreign student will confront me, I will not judge them by how they look. I will not make a prejudgment of their ability to learn based upon how they look or where they came from. Instead, I will talk with them to get to know their personality, characteristic traits, academic strengths and weaknesses, and social skills. By knowing all of this information, I will be able to better instruct them according to how they learn most effectively. I will help to set and reach their goals, emphasizing that one should always give 100% to any task. I will make sure that these students who speak no or little English, get into remedial classes and tutoring in ESL. In addition, I will have the foreign students explain to the class their cultural backgrounds to make students aware and appreciative of all the cultures that exist in the world. … After observing and interacting with the native people of St. Marteen, I could see where their culture has its own internal coherence, integrity, and logic. Their culture is no better or worse than the American cultures. The people of St. Marteen are culture-bound. Their culture has its own rules, policies, and ways of doing things and whose to judge if these practices are better or worse than American practices. [Alecia – white, female]

"Cultural"

- I attend a speech about Native American heritage given by Wawewa Lonewolf, who is a Native American and from Minnesota. Wawewa spoke about the Anishinaabe nation and told the audience that her name means "snow goose." … Wawewa is a medicine woman and counsels people the native way. When someone comes to see her she tries to find what direction they are in. They can be in the direction of north, south, east, or west. Each direction has a meaning. North equals hardship. South equals good things, east equals new beginnings and promises, and west equals endings. I found the speech to be very interesting. Wawewa spoke about and described things such as a French pipe hawk, a tomahawk, a talking stick, sweet grass and a spirit stick. … I certainly learned many things about the Native American heritage that I didn't know before I listened to Wawewa Lonewolf speak about the heritage. The speech was informative. I think I could use this experience to help teach my future students about Native Americans. I would speak about the traditional dress, the tomahawk, the talking stick and many others. I would display pictures and maybe even have the students make a tomahawk using a stick and a rock that they find themselves in the woods. After the students make the tomahawks I would have them do a short report explaining the history of the tomahawk. According to the Snowman and Biehler textbook, it is good to "assign projects and activities that allow students to demonstrate culture specific

knowledge and skills and that encourage students to learn from and about one another's culture" (p. 166). [Jolene – white, female]

- (Long live the differences in people, not the indifferences) Albany seemed to magically disappear as the night went on. I felt as though I had somehow traveled to another country. In the background, the sound of brass and drums blended to create a festive atmosphere. Orgullo Latino, a celebration of Latino pride, was being presented by Spectrum and ALANA Student Services at the College of St. Rose. … Senor Mills addressed the crowd with a warm Bienvenidos and spoke to the group in Spanish. I attempted to translate, with minimal success, since my own experience with Spanish was over twenty-five years ago. I remembered how I had laughed about taking "Espanol" in high school. I am from a small rural community that was 99.9% Caucasian. Out of the entire high schools' student body of approximately 400 students, one student was Jewish, one African-American, and one was Hispanic. This breakdown accurately represented the cultural mix of this community of 2000 residents. The majority of the population was of Polish, German, and Welsh decent. To me, Spanish was only necessary for passing the regents exams. From my perspective, there was no other rationale for learning about the language or the people. My inability to translate into Spanish was addressed by Senor Mills as he once again stated his welcome in English. It was explained that Latinos are any group of Spanish speaking people. There are Latinos from over 21 countries including Honduras, Santa Domingo, Spain, Mexico, and even China. … The Orgullo Latino allowed me to experience a joyous side of people. I was exposed to the background of the Latino culture, allowed to experience the things that are precious to their heritage; their music, poetry, food, and self pride. These things should not be forgotten when teaching students the history of various cultures. There is more to a people that what lies on the surface. There is a depth that is passed on through generations which should be shared. Students will develop a respect for the beliefs and individual differences of other groups with guided exposure (Snowman & Biehler, 2000). Through deeper understanding and exploration of multiple cultures, prejudices based on ignorance will be reduced and students will add to their existing knowledge. [Martha, white, female, Polish-American]
- For my multicultural experience, I chose to go to an art show … For this show "Zen Calligraphy," Hirama has placed special emphasis on using the brush strokes of calligraphy with the pictorial images of the Japanese language. He has chosen these particular images through the practices of Zen Buddhism (for example the ideals of emptiness, surrounding space and the universal). … I could see having a lesson on diversity where I could discuss with my students that there are different languages and different ways of writing. The lesson could also incorporate a poetry unit, where we could read some examples of poetry (namely Haiku). In studying the poetry the students and I could look at the different imagery the poet uses and how that often influences the title of the poem. We could then take a simple Haiku poem and look at the work that represents its' title. As an art project, the students could then create their own Japanese character uses a similar technique Hirama uses (using ink, paper and brushes). As a follow up lesson, the students could also try to write their names, using the Japanese equivalent to our alphabet. According to Snowman, Biehler and Bonk (2000), this lesson would be a "contribution approach" to multiculturalism in the classroom where I could show students the importance of language, no matter what the culture, and how language influences both art and poetry (p.150). This lesson would also allow the students to become more aware of the diversity that is found all over the world. Often times, if students are not provided the knowledge on diversity, I feel it can lead to an ethnocentric idea about America and the English-language culture (Snowman et al., 2000). This exercise will also follow the humanistic model of instruction in that we are defining a difference between another culture and our own, we are exploring the problem through exercises and examples and we are gaining that insight of another culture and how we can use it to learn (Snowman et al., 2000). The students are also taking an individual and/or personal approach by exploring the use of another language to represent their names. As Snowman et al. (2000) point out, exposing children to "the idea that truth is very much in the eye of the beholder" is an effective use of a multicultural education (p.157). I would hope that after completing this lesson with my students, they would be able to realize and understand that there are different forms of expression. What one sees in language and poetry, another person, like Mukyo Hirama, may see as art. [Olivia – white, female]

"Race/Social Class"

- Manuel is an African American, forty-nine years old. He works occasionally washing dishes in a local restaurant. However, his main income is Social Security Disability. Manuel and I spoke for an hour about his educational experience. Manuel was born in the south Bronx, NY in 1950. His father left his mother with five

children, he can't quite remember how old he was when his father left. His family survived on welfare and lived in public housing and conditions were extremely poor. Manuel's schooling was inconsistent, some days he went, some days he stayed home. It depended on whether his mother sent him off or not. Manuel's mom got a job as a live in maid at a white family's home in Long Island and he then regularly went to school and in nice clothes he adds. His most memorable experience was the fourth grade. His teacher, he recalls was Mrs. Shark and she told all the kids that if they didn't do their work they wee going to get a shark attack. She was always showing pictures and movies of shark attacks. "They have some big teeth" Manuel replied "nobody wanted anything to do with no shark attacks." I asked Manuel why he remembered Mrs. Shark so well besides the shark stuff. He remembered that she always came up behind him and put her hands on his shoulder and said "Manuel you are a bright child, you can do anything you set your mind to." "That made me feel good" Manuel remembers. Manuel ended up going to prison, he never finished sixth grade. He was arrested several times for drug usage and trafficking of a controlled substance. It wasn't until the age of 40 that he decided to get his GED while in McGregor correctional facility. He said it wasn't easy, he could barely read or write. He said, "I remember hearing Mrs. Shark saying you're a bright boy Manuel, you can do anything you put your mind to." Manuel got his GED and rehabilitated himself and now reads everything he can get his hands on. He loves to read. He has not committed a crime or used drugs or alcohol since his release from McGregor in 1994. I can see how a teacher's belief in a troubled student can be a big difference in their lives, if not immediately, sometimes down the road a bit. [Walter – white, male, raised and living in rural New York]

- Every year The College of Saint Rose sets up a trip to Washington D.C. … to help out at S.O.M.E.-"So Others Might Eat." … a soup kitchen that is open every day … that services over 200 people three times a day. It also has some servers that help people who need it to get health care, clothing, and shelter. … This year, I was one of the few that went on the trip. … on the first day we arrived at SOME I was taken aback. I realized that many people are homeless; however, just seeing so many people all at once made me feel distressed, heartbroken, and angry. … As I think back, it upset me to see so many people that were homeless and also that were African-American that were there. The vast numbers of African-American people definitely pointed out a flaw in our society. I have learned through my schooling that the groups of minorities are the vast numbers of the homeless. However, to see it with my own eyes made me able for a spilt moment be in their shoes. To feel that pain that they had to go through every day was something that has taught me to look at the world differently. … This experience will help me to be aware of the problem of not only of homeless but other social problems that we face today. One needs to ask why more African American people are homeless, and what this says about our culture. In order to solve any problem that one many have one has to remember to actively take part in finding solutions to the problems. A humanistic teaching approach is having the students learn from not only the teacher but from the world around them (Snowman & Biehler, 2000). I hope that I will be able to set up opportunities for my students to learn about the world around them by giving them hands on activities, and real life experiences, that will make them think on different levels. From a humanistic viewpoint, I hope that some day in my own classroom I will actively challenge the students to look at the world differently. [Amanda – white, female]

"Teenage Mothers"

- In the month since this quiz was dispersed I have spent a lot of time thinking about this assignment. I must admit that when I first read it I thought that it was stupid. I have always considered myself to be a very open-minded person. Everyone of my friends and acquaintances differ from me in at least one of these ways, and I always considered the lack of attention we give to these differences to be a good thing. It's not ignorance, it's tolerance. So I tried to think of a group that I had negative connotations about, and all I could come up with were hate groups, and unfortunately, I even have a few friends that belong in this category. … At my wits end, I went to a Catholic Mass just to get this assignment over with. Then, as I sat down to write my first draft I realized that I had had a genuine experience, one that occurred by accident but was new and meaningful. … three of my best friends and many friends from high-school are teenage mothers. I am ashamed to say that when they told me that they were pregnant, my opinion of them went way down. You know, stupid, irresponsible, what about your future, blah, blah, blah. I spend hardly any time with these friends since they had their babies. … But, Saturday, when Beth called me, I did not even think about the fact that her eight-year-old daughter would be there, or that Beth had had her when she was sixteen, just that I wanted to go to the bazaar. I had a wonderful time, … I also, unwittingly, learned a lot. These girls are not stupid or irresponsible. If anything, they are more responsible than I have ever been, or will be for quite a while. Beth went to nursing school nights after

she graduated high school at the alternate learning center. This gorgeous little girl didn't destroy her future, just changed it. Jasmine is a beautiful, well-behaved girl who loves her mommy and sees her father regularly. I can't exactly say why I had all of these awful stereotypes about teenage mothers before, because my mother was one herself, but I definitely did. I now know that I couldn't be half the woman they are at this age. ... I am hoping to be a high school math teacher. Teenage pregnancy , it seems, is an increasing trend, and by the time I am teaching high school, I imagine that it will be just as, if not more, common. I know now that when a student of mine comes into my class with a round belly and a scared expression, I will be able to comfort her. I will not judge her, or think any less of her, but will respect her all the more, because she is human and has made her choice, and will be that much stronger of a person for it. According to the textbook, this new realization will help me be the best teacher that I can be in several ways. If I have obviously negative opinions of my students, namely pregnant teenagers, their learning will decrease. But if I have obviously positive feelings about my students, despite their situation, their learning will increase, especially, if I can make their perceptions of themselves more positive. This is because, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if a teacher can promote a positive self-concept, then they are communicating their belief in the student's value as a person and as a learner, thereby increasing their inherent desire to learn. This is also related to the concept of multiculturalism, because if I had continued to think that teenage mothers are stupid and irresponsible with no future, I would have communicated that belief to them. Then, through the Pygmalion effect, which occurs when the teacher's expectations of his/her students eventually lead to the students to fulfill those expectations, they would, indeed, become stupid, irresponsible women with no future (in theory). [Kristen, white, female]

Conclusions

As the examples above illustrate, these students have begun to reflect on many issues of diversity through this activity. They have spoken both of developing a better cognitive understanding of diversity and how the topics of individual and group differences covered in the educational psychology course are relevant. They have shown that principles of diversity, multiculturalism and humanistic psychology discussed in their educational psychology class have personal meaning in their real world of interactions with others different than themselves.

Perhaps as important is the evidence in their statements that many of these students have developed a more humanistic perspective of teaching and a positive attitude about the diversity of the learners that they will be teaching in the future. Many have shown a change in attitudes and preconceived beliefs about others from different religious traditions, different cultures, different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and even different choices related to being pregnant.

These student reports have convinced me that this humanistic activity focused on the issue of diversity is a worthwhile learning experience for the students in my undergraduate educational psychology class.

Appendix A

EPY 350: Educational Psychology Name: _____

Humanistic/Multicultural/Diversity Activity

For this assignment you will need to have a **new** experience; one which is different than what you might normally encounter. This experience should involve you learning something about a group of people (or an individual) who differ from you along one or more of the following dimensions: culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race, nationality, social/economic class; intellectual or physical ability. You should choose a dimension and experience that you would not normally be involved or have experience. The purpose is to learn something about someone that you might not otherwise have learned without this experience. Any **new** personal experience that relates to the above dimensions is acceptable.

After your experience you will need to type a 2-page summary/reaction paper. The paper should minimally include **one paragraph each** of the following:

- a descriptive summary of the experience (who, what, when, etc.) (15 points)
- your personal reaction to the experience (what it meant to you) (15 points)
- a reflection of how what you learned might help you in your future career (10 points)
- an integration of humanistic, multicultural, and/or diversity concepts from the Snowman & Biehler (2000) text (10 points)

The paper will be evaluated on a 50-point scale as indicated above. An extra 10 points will be awarded if you post your paper on the class electronic "Discussion Board" to share with the other class members. You will have most of the remaining semester (more than two months) to complete this activity. The paper can be turned in at anytime but NO LATER THAN **THE NEXT TO LAST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER**. Be sure to attach this page as a cover page to your paper.

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Figure 1

Coverage of Diversity Issues in Educational Psychology Texts (copyrights 1998-2000)

Text	Individual Differences	Socio/Cultural Diversity	Exceptionalities
Eggen & Kauchak (1999)	Ch. 4	Ch. 4	Ch. 5
Elliot et al. (2000)	---	Ch. 4	Ch. 5
Gage & Berliner (1998)	Ch. 3	Ch. 5	Ch. 5
Henson & Eller (1999)	Ch. 5	Ch. 4	Ch. 5
LeFrancois (2000)	Ch. 8	Ch. 10	Ch. 9
Ormrod (2000)	Ch. 4	Ch. 4	Ch. 5
Santrock (2000)	Ch. 4	Ch. 5	Ch. 6
Seifert (1999)	---	Ch. 9	Ch. 10
Slavin (2000)	Ch. 4	Ch. 4	Ch. 12
Snowman et al. (2000)	Ch. 4	Ch. 5	Ch. 6
Sprinthall et al. (1998)	Ch. 16	---	Ch. 20
Woolfolk (1998)	Ch. 4	Ch. 5	Ch. 4

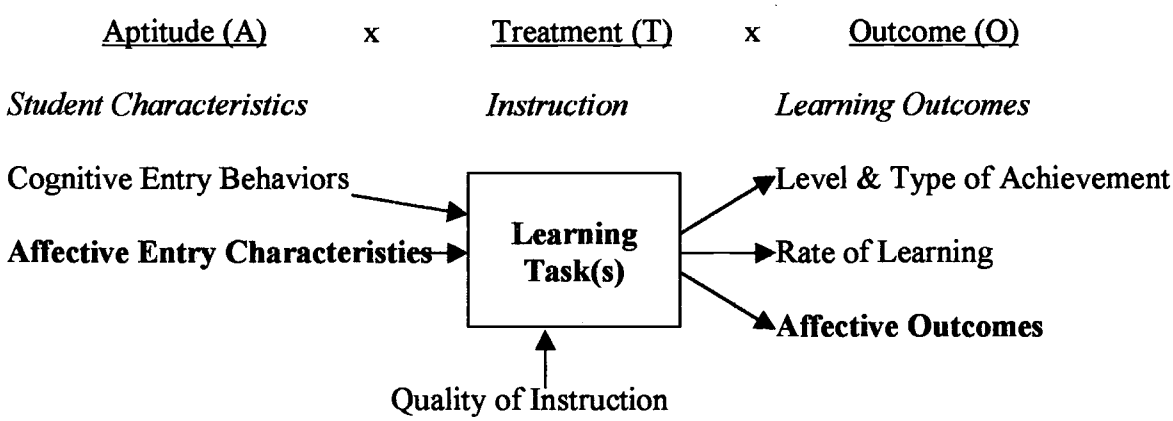
Figure 2

Coverage of Affective Objectives and Humanistic Approaches to Education in Educational Psychology Texts (copyrights 1998-2000)

Text	Affective Objectives	Humanistic Education	Motivation (Maslow)
Eggen & Kauchak (1999)	Ch. 12 (2 pages)	xxx	Ch. 10 (2 pages)
Elliot et al. (2000)	xxx	xxx	Ch. 9 (2 pages)
Gage & Berliner (1998)	Ch. 2 (2 sentences)	xxx	Ch. 8 (2 pages)
Henson & Eller (1999)	Ch. 9 (4 pages)	xxx	Ch. 11 (3 pages)
LeFrancois (2000)	Ch. 13 (1 paragraph)	Ch. 7 (36 pages)	Ch. 11 ((5 pages)
Ormrod (2000)	Ch. 13 (2-3 pages)	xxx	Ch. 12 (2 pages)
Santrock (2000)	???	???	???
Seifert (1999)	???	???	???
Slavin (2000)	Ch. 7/14 (2 paragraphs)	xxx	Ch. 10 (2 pages)
Snowman et al. (2000)	Ch. 10 (2 paragraphs)	Ch. 10 (5 pages)	Ch. 11 (3 pages)
Sprinthall et al. (1998)	xxx	Ch. 12 (3 pages)	Ch. 18 (1 page)
Woolfolk (1998)	Ch. 13 (1 page)	Ch. 13 (2 paragraphs)	Ch. 10 (2 pages)

Figure 3

Bloom's Model of School Learning[2]



[2] Source: Bloom, B. S. (1976). *Human Characteristics and School Learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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