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I would like to start out by saying that this course has been nothing like I expected. When I started this course I was in the mindset of just getting it done to satisfy another requirement on my way to my degree. I realized very quickly that I had the wrong idea about this class and that it could change me forever. I will share with you some of the things that I learned and how and why this course changed me. To do so I will answer questions and respond to objectives that was given to me by my professor.

In what ways have you improved as a citizen in a democracy now that you have learned more about diversity issues? What brought about those improvements? This question is a hard one to fully answer because I am not done improving myself. I am still making changes to my life. For the sake of this essay I will answer it. Before this class I didn't much care or pay attention to diversity issues mostly because they did not directly affect me or so I thought. I have improved a lot because now I look around me and realize that there are diversity issues everywhere around me and they do directly affect me, I just didn't realize it before. I have gained a lot of respect and sympathy for those who are not of the majority population. I have also realized how important it is for me to embrace those people and cultures of other places because we need them here to help us. I have also realized that I can make a difference I can stand up and be a voice for others. The entire course helped me to improve but the most influential things were the readings about angel and Ellis islands and the sacrifices that were made just to make it to America. Their stories really helped me to see that immigrants are no different than me or you; we were just born on the right side of some imaginary line.

What was your biggest accomplishment in the course? I think that my personal biggest accomplishment for me in this course was learning how to look at things with an open mind not to judge others because we don't know who they are and what they have been through or are currently going through. I guess to sum it up I am more accepting of everyone. For me the signature assignment did not help me much. What did help me was the readings and the examples that were given in those readings. I also have to give credit to my other classmates because they helped me a lot with their thoughts and posts. They really helped me to see why diversity is so important.

Reflect on how you thought about diversity issues before you took this course and how you think about it now that the course is over. Have any of your assumptions or understandings changed? Why? What brought about those changes? To be honest I did not concern myself much with the issues that are brought about by diversity and when I did I was not a very kind person. I was set in my ways and had strong opinions when it came to people of other races and especially immigration. I can cheerfully say that my opinions have changed for the better. I feel that the issues of diversity are very important and that they need to be addressed by everyone. There are always two sides to every story and you need to look at and learn both sides before you go and make assumptions. I think the biggest reasons that my

assumptions and opinions have changed are because as I studied and read the readings I realized that these people are no than me and that if I were put in their place I would probably do the same thing.

Examine the effects of our diverse culture on individuals and groups. No matter what people think or say everyone is affected by our diverse culture. Just as simple as the food we eat shows us how our lives are affected. We eat cuisines from around the world for example Chinese food, Mexican food, Italian food, and so on and so forth. There are many other ways that we are affected as well. We are constantly taking in information from everyone and everything we see. As we see and participate in other cultures we have that ingrained into our mind and it changes us a little bit. As a group diversity can bring people together or it can tear people apart and cause fights amongst people that would normally not fight.

Examine a social group's power over another group based on such aspects as language, race, and gender. This class has helped me to start to understand and see how much one race, group or gender can control another. You always hear that there is strength in numbers but you don't really understand that until you are outnumbered in a situation. We speak English in America and we as English speakers have a great deal of power over those who have immigrated here. We can understand each other and we can read signs and listen to the radio and watch the television and know what is going on. If you don't speak English it can be a very scary place and you don't know if people are trying to be nice to you or screw you because you can't understand them. Unfortunately race, gender, language, and sexuality will always be hot topics of debate and I can't foresee that ever changing because we as Americans are too prideful to accept people and things that are not just like us.

Critically examine your own beliefs and attitudes as they relate to diverse cultures. As I said in the beginning of this essay my views have changed tremendously about diverse cultures. At the beginning of this class I honestly disliked a lot of things about other cultures. I realize now looking back and reflecting on this course that my dislike was stemmed from a lack of understanding on my part. Certain things about groups of people bothered me but as I have studied different cultures I realized that I have a lot of the same beliefs and feelings that others have and I just express them in a different way. I used to think that we did not need other cultures but I now realize that it is a must for us to survive. This course has changed my life forever and given me the opportunity to accept embrace diversity and the benefits it provides to me.