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CMST 203 Section 1

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Field Experience Reflection

Section 1

 My favorite experience from the events I attended would have to be the Intercultural Fashion Show. I love clothing, colors, and styles, so this event was definitely the most intriguing. This event captured my attention, and because of that, I was able to learn a lot. I realized that I had misconceptions about clothing from different parts of the world, and I learned new information about the cultures of countries I had never heard of before.

 The Chicago Cultural Center was my second favorite experience for many different reasons. The main reason I really enjoyed this experience was because it was part of my spring break trip with a couple of my close friends. I really liked the feeling of exploring a new place with new friends. My family has gone on a lot of vacations, but this experience was different because I had the freedom of not having my parents with me. This exhibit also showcased a lot of different modern art that I had never experienced in person before. It was difficult to understand most of the artwork, but I am assuming that is almost the point of art; it is always up for different interpretations. The last aspect of this experience that I enjoyed the most was the architecture of the building and all of the intricate details. The entire building was extremely grand with breath taking domes, expensive chandeliers, mosaic floors, and beautiful staircases. The Chicago Cultural Center helped to expose me to a lot of new experiences and culture amidst the extravagant architecture.

 I also really enjoyed the deaf track meet that was held at MSU. I have always enjoyed attending sporting events and appreciating other people’s athletic ability because that is an ability that I lack. However, at this track meet, I was not focusing on the sport itself. I really enjoyed being around a language that I was just learning, because I have never been around deaf people before. I realized how much more I still had to learn about sign language and how much more practice I needed in order to communicate with them or even to understand them.

Section 2

 One concept that I believe is most applicable to my life is **self-awareness**. I think that it is very important to continually evaluate yourself and try to understand why you think or do the things you do. Understanding where your judgements come from can help you try to figure out how to reverse misconceptions or stereotypes that you hold. Our book explains that the journey into other cultures is also a journey into your own culture, and both experiences are equally important for self-growth. If you are not aware of yourself or your beliefs, you are also unable to be aware of others and their beliefs.

 The **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** made me rethink my communication strategies. I discussed this concept when I was analyzing the differences between sign language and English. I had never really thought about how our language can define how we view the world. I know that there are some English words that American Sign Language does not have a direct sign for, and vice versa. Because of this, meaning when translating or communicating can become blurred. After applying the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to my observations at the deaf track meet, I have realized how difficult it may be to communicate in a second language, because you may not be able to fully grasp how the other person views the world.

I know that I will use the concept of **stereotypes** even after this class. I do not think that I will ever stop hearing or using the word stereotypes. Sadly, problems like racism and prejudice will not fade away quickly, if at all. Most popular culture reinforces stereotypes, and our society consumes and learns from popular culture. However, instead of being accepting of stereotypes, I can challenge them by first evaluating held stereotypes and then by having a desire to gain more information that might disprove stereotypes. This is a process I know I will continue throughout my life because stereotypes are harmful and can have negative impacts on communication.

Section 3:

 Overall, I enjoyed the field experience assignments, and I feel like I have learned a lot. If it had not been for these assignments, I would have missed out on many cultural experiences, and I would not have been as likely to reflect on my experiences. At first, it was hard to make myself attend these cultural events. This was because I usually had to go to these events alone, and I strongly dislike feeling like I am alone in a crowd. However, once I was at the event and enjoying the cultural encounter, I found that my new experiences far outweighed my initial uncomfortableness. The main concept that I learned from these assignments was that most people are very kind and welcoming if you show respect, genuine interest in their culture, and a desire to learn more. I also discovered that it is easier to communicate with people from different cultures than I initially imagined. Breaking out of my shell and the small world that I live in has always difficult for me. Nevertheless, these assignments helped to challenge me, and in the end, I gained more knowledge about new cultures.