

Community Work and Learning

Fall 2021 Symposium



ST. CATHERINE
UNIVERSITY

Community Work
and Learning

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Impact of Work:

I worked closely with students and my mentor, Aimee Sever-Hall to promote educational growth. I was able to hold office hours for students who had extra questions and catch them up on any missed information due to being sick or any emergencies. I was also able to contribute more ideas to what the professor had already established for class activities. Together we did what we could to make class time engaging and profitable for everyone involved. My contribution was valuable because I graded homework and formatted some class activities so the professor could use her time to focus on more intense work for the course and department.

Personal Growth:

I learned some unexpected things about myself during this work. During this project, I learned from Aimee how to be culturally appropriate in a practical way. I thought that the way I was acting and speaking related to the deaf community was as appropriate as a hearing person could be having not experienced deafness, but I learned that my choices can still be unintentionally biased. I learned that often word choices and “minor” actions in my mind can have a larger impact on different spheres of people. I also learned how to be wholly others focused. This means that I may have goals as a teaching assistant that assist the professor’s goals, but that these goals are focused solely on the success of students both short and long term. My actions and words both inside and outside the classroom have more influence on these goals than I realized.

Career Impact:

In my future and current work with the deaf community is in full focus when working in this class. I was able to learn more vocabulary in this class than I realized at the beginning, I had the opportunity to get constructive and safe feedback from the professor on my usage of her native language, and I gained practical perspective on my sphere of influence regarding the ways I act and speak about my profession and the community I work in. I thought, because the class I assist in is a beginner level, that I would not be learning any direct content. I thought I would be assisting them in learning signs and phrases that I already know while continuing my practice using American Sign Language with the professor. This was the case, but I also learned a considerable amount of vocabulary that I had not learned before that will be beneficial for interpreting in my future career. Not only did I learn new vocabulary, but I also got feedback on the words and language usage that I was performing. This will help me more easily use sign language to communicate when out in the interpreting field. One of my biggest takeaways I think is about spheres of influence and my impact on others. I have more impact on my peers, my colleagues, my consumers, my profession, other professionals, institutions, and systems than I realized. Aimee and feedback from students has helped me learn that my attitude and actions, though I am not the sole person responsible for success, can have a strong impact either positively or negatively on an interaction.