Stacey Howell

LE 1360

“The Death of a Salesman” by Arthur Miller: Our Final Project

Our final project in Opening Diverse Doors was created around one of the most well written and famous plays – “The Death of a Salesman” written by Arthur Miller. After reading the play, my peers and I teamed up to make a video describing Arthur Miller’s life, the play itself, and its’ characters. This project was a great way to exercise the key elements to diversity – such as understanding and communication—and I am very pleased to say we created this project together as a class.

The part I played in this video was the character role of “The Woman”. She is Willy Loman’s (the main character of the play) mistress. The students who took the role of the characters played their part in first person – for example I said “I am the woman, and Willy spoils me with fine stockings”. This made a big impact on me personally because I felt like I was stepping into someone else’s shoes and felt a sense of understanding in my similarities and differences from the characters in the play.

This play introduced many different relationships to think about including husband to wife, father to son, employer to employee, and mother to son. Each relationship was different and complex, and in my opinion could have been improved with more effective communication. As a parallel, us as students had to communicate effectively with one another in order to make this a successful project. One of the main things I kept in mind was that in communication, leadership is a process, it is situational, and it is interactive. I think we all applied these guidelines and communicated very efficiently and pleasantly with one another to get the video set up and organized so we would have a great final result.

This play also made me think about “the American dream”. There are many different ideas of the American dream, but I portray it as getting married to the person you love, having children, and buying a nice house where eventually your grandchildren can visit. Of course one of the most important factors to acquiring these things is money. In this play we saw Willy struggling to make a name for himself in his career and felt the stress that he felt from trying to make ends meet. In the end of the play, Willy commits suicide and his wife, Linda, speaks to him at his grave. She tells him that she made the final house payment – that they are free from debt. Linda was so supportive to Willy and they still managed to pay off the house; it made me realize there is much more to the American dream than money – that love and support can go a long way in a relationship and in chasing the American dream.

This final project was very beneficial to me personally to make me think and want to work on being conscious of many different areas of diversity – including but not limited to being understanding, thinking about other’s points of view, communicating effectively, and trying to be a good teammate. Producing a video with my peers for the final project was a great learning experience and I enjoyed being able to apply the lessons I learned into my every day life.