Summative Reflection

There are two meaningful concepts that I will take away from this class. First, the need for faculty to be aware of their classroom climate, and the role faculty have influencing such a climate. Second, the importance of faculty to have a better awareness of students in marginalized groups, as well as, barriers present that influence academic success. Role models are largely a predictor for life choices and career choices for many individuals, as, learners model and emulate what they observe as children and young adults. Diversity in all careers will promote a more diverse population to succeed academically which will promote cultural capitol for all groups. Lack of diversity to model creates barriers for individuals to follow a passion or a dream because there not a representative to emulate or encourage. Moreover, classroom climate is dependent upon the faculty member leading the class. It is our job to create an inviting and equitable classroom for all to learn and feel welcome. Promoting a healthy classroom climate will be beneficial for all individuals to learn how to work respectfully together. A healthy classroom climate includes respect and acceptance for all members of the class. Moreover, society as a whole would benefit from similar constructs.

There were several themes that were challenging. First, there is currently lack of diversity in STEM courses and careers. However, no one individual is excluded from taking a STEM course or choosing a career in STEM. Meaning, any individual can choose this pathway if they desire. It appears that the barriers discouraging underrepresented groups from choosing a certain pathway in STEM is an indirect influence, such as lack of role models or underachievement academically? Therefore, perhaps the focus for diversity and inclusion with such careers should be evaluating ways to promote academic success with entry level courses which will promote

and encourage further STEM courses and success. Additionally, academic success observed within cultures will promote more role modeling to encourage more underrepresented individuals to achieve academic success.

Furthermore, the lack of diversity in my own discipline of dental hygiene and dental careers, in general, exists presently. I have not observed the lack of diversity in the dental profession until a student mentioned this detail. The student was correct. There is a severe lack of diversity in the dental field by a 10 to 1 ratio. This ratio is consistently observed, in both, dental hygiene students and dental hygiene faculty. Interestingly, I was not aware of the discrepancy until an individual brought such a discrepancy to my awareness. My research regarding the lack of diversity in the dental field suggests that the issue is multifactorial: lack of role models in the field, and opportunities not being presented to young adults on pathway careers via career counselors, and lack of underrepresented students enrolled in STEM courses. Additional barriers include, individuals not completing the requirements to be accepted into dental/dental hygiene schools. Therefore, more focus on academic success for underrepresented groups may facilitate a more diverse career pathway for such individuals.

I am happy to report that I believe my classroom climate is welcoming to all individuals, and I encourage all voices to be heard. A healthcare/dental provider cares for a diverse population, therefore, students are educated that all lives matter and all individuals are counting on you to provide your personal best. Additionally, one of my students is a first generation college graduate from the Dominican Republic. He has been selected to be a graduation

 speaker and requested me to review his speech prior to submitting it. One never knows the difference you may have in a life! In closing, there were great points and suggestions that I will take- way from this course, including teaching styles, communication, and the power of verbiage. One change I plan to make is the content in my syllabi for all courses. I think there is language that can be changed from authoritative to autonomous verbiage. I adopted the syllabi from the previous professors who taught the classes. I now know the importance of verbiage and tone.