**Caroline Smith**

**Portfolio Reflection 3**

**Step 4: Think about issues related to race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality. How has your thinking changed regarding these issues from when you first started taking classes related to inequality to today? You will want a paragraph that addresses each of the five areas above. Your paragraphs should discuss how your views have changed and incorporate concepts you have learned that have helped to change your views. You should also refer to the papers you wrote that deal with these issues. (5 paragraphs)**

**Race:** As a sociology major, I have taken many relevant courses involving race. Sociologists define race as a human classification system that divides people into groups based on physical characteristics and is a social construct. Before taking courses that focused on race in society, many concepts hadn't crossed my mind. Sociologists focus on studying how race affects society and causes different groups. In my Sociology 345 course, Social Research, and Program Evaluation, we looked at how race and class correlated with different home lives for children. Race is simply just a characteristic that groups people who share biological traits that society believes to be socially significant. My prior knowledge of race has grown to be stronger and I now know how race can be studied and researched in society.

**Class:** When it comes to learning about classes in society, I thought I knew the basic knowledge. Throughout classes I have taken such as Sociology of the Welfare State and Social Policy, and Introduction to Social Inequality and Difference I have learned lots of new information about different class levels in society. In sociology, class is defined as people with a similar status in society. The status of class is determined by factors such as wealth, work, income, education, race, and ethnicity. I used to think that class was just how much money you had and didn't consider that there are many other factors than just income. My knowledge of different classes in society has grown significantly being a Sociology major.

**Gender:** I have taken multiple courses that involve gender. Throughout sociology courses, I have learned that gender is something sociologists are constantly studying. Gender in sociology is defined as a social construct that refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys. The norms that are associated with men and women in society are constantly being studied. Due to gender being a social construct, it varies from society to society and everyone has their own beliefs and opinions. Today many different people in society characterize themselves as different genders such as women, males, non-binary, and trans. It is important that I have knowledge about gender and how society views it.

**Disability:** As a sociology major, I took several different Special Education courses. Courses such as Perspectives on Childhood and Parenting, Life-Span Development, Sociology of Education, Disability in Society, and Sociology and Disability. All of these courses have strengthened my knowledge of disability in our society. Sociologists define disability as disability is the experience of limitations or difficulties in performing important tasks due to biological conditions as experienced in particular environmental contexts. Disability sociology is the study of how society and institutions construct and practice health, illness, and well-being. Disability can be seen in society in many different areas such as education. Attached to my portfolio is a paper that discusses how disability is viewed in the education setting.

**Sexuality:** The main sociology course I took that focused on sexuality was ​​Sexuality in Society. This course discussed the differences between gender and sexuality and opened my eyes to all of the different sexualities society has. Gender is biological whereas sexuality is who you are attracted to and behaviors and feelings about others. Society has become more accepting of sexualities but is a very touchy topic due to everyone's personal beliefs. As a Women, Gender, and Sexuality minor, I have learned much about sexuality and how society views it. In my marriage and family course, we focused on learning about mainly straight couples. In my women's gender and sexuality course, we learn about bisexual couples, same-sex couples, and trans couples. Many couples engage in different types of relationships such as open relationships. For my final project in my sexuality and society class, I wrote about how my view of sexuality in society has changed and open relationships in society

**Step 5: How do you see your changing views about issues related to inequality potentially affecting your career? (1 paragraph)**

I believe that everything I have learned throughout my sociology career at Longwood University has set me up and taught me more knowledge of how to be a better member of society. I consider myself to be a very accepting person and pride myself on accepting others though they might not think or act like me. My knowledge of how others in society might be such as being a different race, coming from a different class than I, having a disability, identifying as a different gender, or having a different sexuality are all things I have learned to know about. I think that my views and knowledge will set me up to work with people of all kinds and don't see it affecting my career negatively at all. Considering I want to have a career as a Family/Child counselor, I will be working with people of all kinds and think it is important to know inequalities and have knowledge on how to face them.