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ENGL 2010 – Intermediate Writing

Reflection Essay

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Pause... and Reflect

I selected the social issue of minimum wage not being a livable wage in Utah because of the deeper affect it has that many might not be aware of. Seeing individuals not being able to provide basic necessities for themselves and or families. These are individuals that are around us everyday that might be struggling, and we are unaware. In the state of Utah specifically, we are seeing that we have a huge problem of not having affordable housing for those lower to middle class incomes. Individuals and or families making the choice of living in a home that is an area that they feel unsafe should not become a norm. But they should also not have to break their back to exceed the normal 30% of their income to go towards their shelter. This was an issue that affected all individuals, and at any point of one's life may encounter a situation where they see the reality of minimum and livable wage.

The reality is that increasing the federal minimum wage of Utah, which is \$7.25, does not exactly solve anything. If we look closely many jobs don't impose the \$7.25, they pay a bit higher than that, but that still doesn't mean that they provide their employees with an exact livable wage. Once you get your head around this idea it allows you to shift your viewpoint on this issue. For me I saw it as our wages not keeping up with our basic living necessities of

shelter and food. I always thought that if you got a job that was above the federal minimum wage that you would be able to live off that as a single individual. But learning that in our state of Utah many have to work more than one job to provide themselves with some type of shelter is truly shocking, especially once you start a family. Thus, created some unfairness in my mind that there were individuals that went through this and the state was falling short to help.

There were various questions that ran through my mind as I continued to dig deeper into my social issue. Our state of Utah is at its highest construction rate, especially of homes, but why are they unable to provide affordable homes for our society? Why construct condos and or townhomes that your lower to mid incomes were unable to actually afford? We strike the blame in not having enough space to build family homes, but to me this just seemed like an excuse to avoid the bigger issue at hand.

The genre that I preferred when tackling this social issue was the narrative writing, even though it took me awhile to understand the format of how to present my issue. This genre really allowed you to put yourself in the shoes of an individual that is living your social issue. It really did not allow you to insert your own bias if you had any because you were not telling your story but a story of another individual. Though I might have not mastered this genre it make me have to learn how to show my audience my writing rather than to tell them my writing. When writing about this social issue, it occurred to me that once you take that responsibility of writing about it, you are creating a voice for whatever your social issue might be. You want to be heard, and therefore you are one of the many voices your social issue has now.

This experience was an overall learning experience, I'd like to think that these experiences allow you to grow as a writer as well as become a more aware individual. For me personally, there are many times where I have seen issues that are reported on the news but brush off their importance because I am not impacted. But when doing research on an issue that your community is being affected by really creates a shift in your way of thinking, at least it did for me. What I would want for my audience to take from my writing is that this is an issue that we are living with today, tomorrow and it is our responsibility to take action and evoke change in our society. It is not just one individual or just one family that this is impacting and in that sense my audience might be going through similar scenarios that occur with this issue. My audience can take away the knowledge of knowing what is going on around them in the community that they live in today and with that knowledge become more aware.