Core 1: Weekly Response Week #

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Due in hard copy and/or on turnitin.com the first discussion section class following lecture.

Name: Majok Ring Date: 3/22/15

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Lecturer: Robin DeLugan & Steve Roussos

Lecture Title “Community Research in the San Joaquin Valley”

Lecture’s Central Argument: Community research remains an integral aspect of a well-functioning society. The idea is that since California pours large amounts of money into its universities for higher quality education and opportunities, it is important for us to give back to our communities and use what we have learned to apply to the lives of the people within the central valley in order to establish a better system of communication and give them the chance to participate and enact change within their communities.

Lecture’s Supporting Evidence/Examples:

Through the Blum center at UC Merced, there is an ongoing effort to enact community research as they will be introducing a new minor which focuses on community engagement and active participation. Steve envisioned a community which focuses on a shared set of values/visions where institutes of higher education and supporting organizations work hand in hand to provide resources for further community development which will benefit the community. Steve also noted the desperate need for this program within the valley as it is one of the richest agricultural hubs in the world yet a majority of its population is stricken by social ills such as a lack of education, poverty, obesity, pollution and disease. He also stated that about +60% of adults were obese in which would also influence their children to become obese as well and pass on shared eating habits. Unemployment for Merced County is at 18.8%, much higher than the national average.

Three questions you have with respect to this lecture:

Other Core 1 subjects to which the lecture might be related: Knowledge and its effect upon the community. The pursuit of it although innate in all peoples, can be decreased by a lack of resources and guidance.

* Since this ReCCES endores community participation, wlil these projects open to all students at UC Merced or those who have specific connections to the Blum center?
* Will the focus of this program be more slanted towards the environmental issues within the valley or social issues?
* What database do they use to get their information? How can we decrease the dropout rate?

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Within this week’s lecture “Community Research in the San Joaquin Valley” by Robin DeLugan & Steve Roussos, we focused on the necessity for community engaged research as the central valley has a host of issues which are ignored due to its lesser infrastructure and heavy focus on agriculture. Steve starts by highlighting the disparity of wages between the agriculture industry within the central valley and that of the residents. Although this area serves as a prideful statement of California’s expansive agricultural industry, we are ignoring the plight of the residents as they are ailed by poverty, disease, pollution, obesity, crime, and a lack of community engagement. The Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES) at UC Merced hopes to alleviate these effects by having the students take an active role in working with the community and show them that they can be a part of the process and share in the fruits of any new progress or advancement that the university may produce. A key issue within the San Jaoquin valley is the high unemployment rate which can become a contributor to a variety of other issues. This is exemplified through Joe Mathew’s statement in “All California’s Problems Lead to the San Joaquin Valley” , “When people talk about the lack of jobs in California, they are really talking (even if they don’t realize it) about the San Joaquin, where unemployment remains in double digits even as most of the state experiences economic recovery” (Mathews 2). This statement serves the purpose of highlighting the lack of relevance of the central valley as not many people are paying attention to its issues while yet still benefiting from its agriculture. When people are educated in certain topics and are really shown images of the poverty and given hard data about the teen pregnancy rates, housing concerns, and disease, they will have be able to grow more interest with the issue at hand. This issue of a lack of concern is also presented within Alyssa Castro’s “ Merced’s Kids Are Not Alright”, as she states “The youth disconnection is part of a bigger issue: Merced has the highest rate of child poverty in the state—40 percent according to the U.S. census—and we also have more kids, proportionally, than most counties” (Castro 1). Here, disconnected youth are growing within the valley as they grow proportionally to other issues. They can serve as an indicator of the general health of the valley as these kids are a reflection of their parents and often follow within similar paths and can develop similar problems and share those problems with their own children. By understanding this issue, we can take a greater step towards enacting efficient and lasting change within the community.