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Reflection Paper

When I was assigned this project, I was overwhelmed with the possibilities of who I could interview. I had made lists ranging from kart collectors at Kroger to staff at Virginia Tech. I finally decided on Jane Doe, a hairdresser at Great Clips in Blacksburg, because of the path taken to the job.

Many minimum wage jobs require no past experience, not many skills, and people who end up there normally had no intention of ever holding that job. Hairdressers, on the other hand, knew that they were headed in this direction for some time. It required a couple years of cosmetology school and some time practicing on mannequins and real people. I felt that it would be most interesting to see how someone chose the path of a minimum wage job, and how they felt about their job now.

Overall, Doe repeated that she loves her job and loves the people that she works with. Unlike other hair salons, Doe is paid on an hourly wage of \$7.75 per hour plus tips, and gets some commission on hair products sold. She commutes every day from Salem, but knows the commute is worth it, especially since she is lucky enough to have a job.

Though it was never clearly indicated in the interview, I believe Doe graduated from high school, then continued on to cosmetology school, and never received a college education. She has lived in southern Virginia her entire life. During the interview, these aspects of her life seemed to show in the way she communicated.

When asked to share stories or share her feelings about the workplace, I noticed that Doe would curse or say inappropriate remarks about customers; remarks which I believe would have been filtered by someone with a higher education. This communication pattern, along with other aspects of life, I'm sure, could be traced back to her parents. Though it was never mentioned in the interview, Smith's parents most likely did not have more than a high school degree. Smith's mother is a bus driver for the City of Salem, and always has been a bus driver through different companies. Smith's father doesn't live nor associate with the family much anymore, and she never listed a profession for him.

Smith's sister, who lives in New York City and works as a graphics designer for the New York Rangers hockey team, has skewed this pattern. Most likely, this position requires a college degree. Doe

said her sister is married and lives a stable life in New York. When talking about this subject, there seemed to be no jealousy or bitterness towards her sister's position. Doe never brought up college or her decision of whether or not to go. The interview made her sound confident in her career choice since she had made it, though she does wish for more money or benefits.

Though I knew it existed, I never realized how different your physical location and education could affect your lifestyle. Living in Blacksburg and interacting with mostly students at a University, I wasn't used to hearing the remarks made by Doe in such a nonchalant manner.