

Student's Name

Tutor's Name

Course

Date

## “Some Lessons from the Assembly Line”

### **Introduction**

“Some Lessons from the Assembly Line” is an article that was written by Andrew Braaksama. The article focuses on the experiences of Braaksama while he was working in a factory (Braaksama). He talks about the wages that he earned in the factory and how a college degree could have given him a better job. He discusses the guilt he felt when he compared himself to other factory workers who had no opportunity of going to college. He experienced growth and maturity while working at the factory and it made him different from other students. He understood the importance of finishing college and getting a degree. The narration of Braaksama is an indication of why it is important for students to study hard and get their college degrees.

### **Wages in the Factory**

In the article, Braaksama shows his struggles with the blue-collar job that he got. He indicates that he could have afforded a better life if he could have been a professional with a college degree (Braaksama). He felt that his value as a blue-collar worker was not appreciated in the workplace. Initially, he had thought that as a college student, his knowledge and time were important, and therefore, he was supposed to be considered and paid more. In one instance, he stated that “after a particularly exhausting string of 12-hour days at a plastic factory, I remember

being shocked at how small my check seemed” (Braaskama). Despite this statement, Braaksama was aware that the overtime he had worked in the factory was more valuable and paying as compared to other part-time jobs he needed to support the expensive campus lifestyle.

An important idea that Braaksama mentions is about having a degree and being a professional. He indicates that it can ensure that one has better wages. Based on this argument, it implies that education is a powerful tool and needs to be used properly (Bhardwaj 27). Long working hours do not constitute increased wages in blue-collar jobs. Therefore, young people should explore all the available opportunities before jumping into any of them.

### **Life in the Factory and School**

Braaksama feels guilty when he compares his life to other workers. He feels guilty for working for only a few months while others had spent much of their lives working on the factory floor (Braaksama). After working for a few months in the factory, Braaksama had the opportunity of going back to the lavish campus lifestyle. Life in the factory was very different from that in school. The difference between Braaksama and other ordinary workers was that all the effort he put in had an end goal of getting money to support the lavish campus lifestyle. However, this did not prevent him from being humble and accountable to the team that he was part of.

A female worker who noticed that he had put in a lot of effort told him, “this job pays well, but its hell on the body. Study hard and keep reading” (Braaksama). She read whenever he had time to. Braaksama felt the significance of the lessons he learned from the ordinary factory workers. He compared his life with that of ordinary factory workers he worked with. He said that “my lessons about education are learned at the expense of those who were not unfortunate

enough to receive one” (Braaksama). He saw the importance of graduating from college. This did not make him judge or mock his colleagues for the job that they were doing at the factory. He got inspired by their struggle and admired them for having a genuine source of income.

### **Growth and Maturity**

Braaksama displayed maturity and experienced growth while working in the factory. The life at the factory taught him the importance of working hard for his money, education, and dreams. He stated that “the things that factory work has taught me –how lucky I am to get an education” (Connelly 91). He learned about the importance of working hard and how it was easy for one to lose his or her job and have an undesired lifestyle. He acknowledged the importance of not skipping classes or failing to turn in quality assignments. He had the experience of how life would be if he failed to get an education. Acknowledging this reality had a huge impact on the life of Braaskama.

Based on this, the article gives lessons to students about the importance of education. Students should learn that hard work is not just in the workplace, but also in gaining education (Bhardwaj 27). Braaksama decided to use his experience to help other students make better choices. It was an effective thing to do. Today, it is essential for students to make informed decisions. The lessons from the article can help students who are still in college or are in the workforce.

### **Factory and Part-Time Jobs**

Braaksama talked about why he chose to work in the factory as opposed to doing part-time jobs. One main reason why Braaksama chose to work at the factory was the 40 hours overtime he got each week (Braaksama). Another advantage was that he lived with his parents

during the summer. Apart from saving money, Braaksama gained experience that many of his fellow students did not have. He had experienced reality in the outside world and gained wisdom from the people he was working with at the factory (Connelly 91). He developed effective ways of surviving in the harsh workplace that did not meet his standards.

At the factory, everyone had to work their shift to get paid. Braaskama learned about how other workers had to work hard to pay their bills despite the income earned not meeting all the desired needs. Braaksama learned that without education, he would work for long hours with low pay (Braaksama). Factors such as insurance and taxes reduced the total amount of money he earned. He felt that the wages did not match his knowledge and skills. However, he knew that he had to budget with what he had. He knew that some of his classmates would catch up in the future, but at that moment, he was happy that he was not relying on his parents to support him fully. It can be stated that Braaskama was responsible for his life and education (Wyrick 272). He recognized the importance of growing into an adult. The majority of the students failed to understand why he was glad to be back in school when they were not. In his mind, he knew what other students were missing.

### **School after Work**

Back at the school, Braaskama viewed his life differently. He saw himself as a mature adult (Connelly 91). As a student, he saw the importance of being serious and finishing his college degree. Apart from applying what he had learned at the factory, he used his wages on school necessities such as books. He had learned about the importance of working and why he needed to do so while at the factory. He learned about the possibility of losing a job and how people suffered from such issues. For example, he learned that the department he was working

for would be moved to Mexico, and people would lose their jobs (Braaskama). The main reason for moving the department to Mexico was that the labor paid was cheap as compared to what Braaskama and his colleagues were receiving.

Most importantly, he learned about the importance of receiving an education. He learned that with education, there would be a difference in his life. While in school, Braaskama thought about the advertisements on the value of education that he had come across. After working at the factory, he clearly understood what they meant (Braaskama 272). He understood what it meant to lose a job and to be vulnerable just because another person agreed to do a job at a reduced wage. He learned that those without an education get the most hit from such decisions by leaders. It is such lessons that other students are supposed to learn. It will motivate them to work hard for the life they want to live in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Andrew Braaskama was a college student that gave insights to graduating students about the blue-collar industry. His insights were based on the experiences that he had while working at a factory. Based on the article, Braaskama taught students that education is not just about being in the classroom. It is about getting life lessons from different places that they never thought of. Apart from studying hard, being successful is also about working hard in other aspects of life.

One can be in college and decide to join the blue-collar industry for different reasons. It can be about adulthood or the desire to live a life that one wants. However, with a degree, the confidence of getting a better job and better pay is increased. The lessons from Braaskama can help graduate students learn about the importance of enhancing their skills and survive in the world. It is thus important for students to seek advice on how they can better their lives.

Works Cited

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