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Mid Quarter Self Evaluation

Winter 2018

Local Food For Change

Now arriving at the halfway mark of my final quarter as an undergraduate, I have never felt more enriched in my studies. Working with three Portland based internships, I have taken a deeper look into localizing food when in a commodified and industrialized industry. My first learning objective coincides with my first internship at Farm to Fit looking at the nutritional needs community members and how that is formed into delicious, locally sourced meals. My first three weeks was spent packaging the food into containers that are then delivered to subscribers. Packaging the food has had me take a peek into portions and caloric intake of each individual customer. I then transitioned into food preparation, a bit of a backwards step on how the food gets to packaging. This process is intricate due to the mass amount of food that need to be cooked down, cut up and formed into nutrient dense meals. My takeaways have been the focus on making purley delicious food and following strict health codes to avoid cross contamination.

The next learning objective met so far introduces new perspectives on youth about local and equitable food at Growing Gardens with Glenfair Elementary. This involves a second grade after school program with daily trips to the garden. The past couple weeks we have engaged students in how plants grow and introductions to seeds. Some days have been harder than others because their attention spans only go so far but they always become focused when we do our food tasting labs. They’ve tried yogurt dips with apples, popcorn straight off the cob, veggies and dip and pickles vegetables. In the garden we teach them about what is growing, what is dying, weeds to identify and fun garden games. This is probably my favorite internship because you can see the students knowledge of plants grow each week and they make my day every time.

My learning objective with celebrate catering has been one that has altered the most. I came in thinking the company was sustainably based and local but it has more so been a work in progress towards better sustainability practices, which I have enjoyed because it is a way to implement my studies into my work place. The company is working towards a new composting plan to eliminate waste and is updating their seasonal menu into spring from winter. The most localized food I have come across is salmon, other than that they are trying to transition from food providers like Aramark and spend more money on better quality food providers. I have spent much of my time learning the ropes of running a local business and how to communicate with clients. Food presentation has also been something that has sparked my interest as it is specifically for aesthetics but so important for the business. In the next coming weeks I hope to delve more into how transitions can be made towards sustainability without harming their catering and profit margin.

Finally, my last objective added recently, is to read several academic texts focusing on the marketing component of sustainability and localization and why that is an upcoming trend. I have begun reading *Food Politics* by Robert Paalberg, which touches on if the “organic” transition is far off from industrialized food, and the similarities. The next couple of weeks, I look forward to reading more into the marketing of local food as it applies to my internship at celebrate, my takeaways from these texts may help with my input there.

My learning objectives have been met but have room to expand. Some difficulties I hope to fix by week ten is my lack of hours. I thought for some reason I only needed twenty hours a week, yet I need thirty. Likewise, my energy levels from being pregnant have dwindled, so my motivation needs to stay in check if I want to accomplish twelve credits. Other than that, I am very proud of my work so far and the connections I have made. This quarter has been a lovely way to round out my food studies, taking a step outside of the classroom and applying my academia to the real world.