

What are the consequences of illiteracy on a societal, rather than individual, le...

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Assignment 2: Kozol's article "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society" identifies the serious problems that impact the lives of those who cannot read. What are the consequences of illiteracy on a societal, rather than individual, level in Canada? Effects of Illiteracy on a Societal Level in Canada in "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society" Ka Ho Hui 063313084 Mr. Anthony Dayton EAC150IE College English November 3, 2011 Outline:

Illiteracy in Canada not only affects the individual, but it has major consequences on economy, social and political for Canadian society. 1. The economics of the country depends heavily on the productivity and the ability to best allocate resources. a. Illiterates have low productivity compare to the skilled workforce. i. Even janitors need to read ii. Couldn't read the instruction from the management. b. Illiterates increase the cost of health system and other social assistance. i. They lack the information regarding general health care. ii. They could not read the warning label result in higher accident rates iii.

Illiterates need more support from the social assistance. 2. Social problems like the crime rates and the cost of social services like health system will be increased by illiterates. a. Illiterates being both victims and criminals i. Easy to fall victim to fraud. They have to believe what the other people said. ii. Illiterates will most likely have low incomes and have to buy brand-name groceries. The result is increased number of robbery 3. The government will not be able to act for and represent the people of the country if illiterates could not make informed decisions in terms of who to vote. a. Most of the illiterates do not vote. . They do not have a mean to acquire information to make the vote decision. ii. They vote for a face, a smile, or a style, not for a <https://assignbuster.com/what-are-the-consequences-of-illiteracy-on-a-societal-rather-than-individual-level-in-canada-assignment/>

mind or character or body of belief. iii. Because the government is chosen by the people who voted, it will not benefit the illiterates as much as the well-educated, wealthier people. In Kozol's article "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society" identifies many problems that impact America on both societal and individual level. Similarly, Illiteracy in Canada not only affects the individual, but it has major consequences on economy, social and political for Canadian society.

Economy is the economic system that analyzes the production and distribution of resources of a country. It is determined by the productivity of the country and the ability to best allocate their limited resources. In Canada, most of the workforces are focusing on manufacture and service. As an illiterate, it is impossible to have high productivity in either manufacture or service field. Just like the quote in Kozol's article "Today, even if you're a janitor, there's still reading and writing... They leave a note saying, 'Go to room so-and-so...' You can't do it.

You can't read it. You don't know." (99) They do not know what they have to do because they could not read the instructions especially in this digital age. Moreover, the inability to read the warning label on the machine or chemical will also unnecessarily increase the accident rates of manufacturing. In general, illiterates also lack the knowledge of health care like nutrition and potential food hazard because they could read neither the magazines nor food label. Unhealthy or injured Illiterates will have no productivity and directly increase the cost of health system.

As a result, heavily damage the economy of Canada. A Country consists of many Illiterates will undoubtedly has a higher criminal rates than a country with many high educated citizens. As mentioned in Kozol's article, " they have signed their names to documents they could not read and which nobody, in the hectic situation that prevails so often in those overcrowded hospitals that serve the urban poor, had even bothered to explain. "(96) Although Kozol was talking about the hospital in this quote, the same thing could happen to any illiterates in Canada like renting a house or getting a mortgage.

They could not read the documents by themselves before signing their names on it. They have no choices but to trust the personal's explanation if that personal chooses to explain to them at all. The inability to read a document makes them very vulnerable to fraud and as a result indirectly increases the crime rates of fraud. On the other hand, illiterates will suffer from low incomes and high expenses because they have no choice but to buy brand-name groceries. They will have a hard time to make a living. Some of them might have to resolve the situation with robbery and hence, directly contribute to the crime rates.

The other method to make a living besides being a criminal is to find the social services supported by the government. For example, free counselling and advocacy services to unemployed illiterates or the tax refund, tax reduction for the illiterates with low incomes. Both of them will hurt Canada in terms of money distribution because the money spent helping illiterates here could be spent better elsewhere like education and the economy. Both

America and Canada are democracy. Every citizen in the country has the right to vote for the governor they prefer. However, the worth of illiterates' votes is questionable. Illiterate citizens seldom vote. Those who do are forced to cast a vote of questionable worth. They cannot make informed decisions based on serious print information. "(Kozol 94) and " More frequently, they vote for a face, a smile, or a style, not for a mind or character or body of beliefs. " Although this was written based on the United State in 1980s, the situation in Canada right now does not have much different. Even with all the media like television and radio, the serious information about the candidates' beliefs are still on paper. Illiterates will have to choose from what they heard from the media.

Voting is very important because it is the process of choosing the government that represent and serve the people of the country. Without the votes from illiterates, instead of the representing the majority of Canada, the government will only reflects the desire of wealthier and educated people. In Canada, the numbers of illiterates are decreasing thanks to the education. However, the problems identified in the article " The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society" stay the same. Illiteracy still creates many problems that impacts Canadian society in terms of economy, social and political.

Knowledge is our only weapon to counter this " human cost". Just like the quote in Kozol's article, "' A people who mean to be their own governors,' James Madison wrote, ' must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. '" (94)

Works Cited: Kozol, Jonathan. "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society"

Mercury Reader. Ed. Natalie Danner and Mary Kate Paris. Boston: Pearson

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