
Unit 4: Social Inequality

Unit Overview:

The primary focus of Unit 4 is on inequality in society. The student will examine the various domains in which social problems exist, and the ways in which they can be overcome. There are some who will argue that the primary focus of Sociology, and by that respect Sociologists, is to address the inequities of life. Through systematic observation, analysis and study, Sociologists identify the ways that society is “unfair”, and finds the means and/or proposals to remedy the situations. Unit 4 examines some of the last remaining social inequalities, and endeavors to raise the awareness of the learner in helping to correct some social injustices.

Day 1 and Day 2

Objective: Over the next Two days, through the skills established in Bloom’s Taxonomy (Comprehension, Knowledge, Analysis, Application, Evaluation, Synthesis) the learner will develop the ability to synthesize and explain the ways in which Wealth and Social Class help perpetuate Social Inequality.

Topics:

Urban planning exercise

Procedures:

Day 1: Student will draw and design “Model Town”.

Day2: Student will complete Model Town Project: Unit 4 Project 1 part 1

Motivation:

Lesson Background:

This is a simple project that let’s the students design a mock-town, and create their own mini-sociology laboratory. Throughout Unit 4 students will be asked to update the status of their town in respect to all the issues of Social Inequality covered in the unit (Wealth, Race, and Gender.)

By following the checklist on Unit 4 Project 1 part 1 worksheet, students will complete all of the preliminary steps.

It is suggested that the map of the town be placed on a full sheet of poster board. Small 8.5 x 11 papers generally prevent true visual scope of the project.

Daily Lesson Plans

Unit 4: Social Inequality

If you, or your students, ever played Sim-City for the computer, then you will understand this project right off the bat. You are faced with a blank terrain, and it's up to you to design ALL the features.

Here is where it gets "slightly" complicated. For every choice that your students make in regards to your town, be sure to monitor what possible repercussions there may be as a result of it. I can recall one student of mine who wanted to be funny. He asked me if he could put a brothel in the town. To his shock, I told him absolutely. He thought it was great. Then two weeks later when we did a unit on crime and deviance, he couldn't believe how much work he had made for himself. There were so many questions to answer about that stupid brothel...but he came up with a novel solution. He had the police raid it, and bust the mayor in the process. He wrote it all up in the town newsletter. It was the best story of the semester. Later on he was puzzled to find why he had to do a story on the corrupt mayor, but it was for our unit on government.

That is the point though. Tell your students to stay consistent with their choices. But also tell them to stay realistic. If they are putting drugs in town, well then what model towns are they using for a real life comparison. Whether it is wealth, race or aging, encourage them to be creative, but plausible.

As far as the other requirements, they are fairly straightforward. The most important one is the town history. This is where all the subtle details of the town and the map will be explained to you, and the rest of the class.

All of the other items of the project sheet, will help flesh out the town, and give the students the model they need to let their imaginations run unfettered.

Homework

Day 1: Complete Unit 4 Project 1 Map

Day 2: Complete Unit 4 Project 1 part 1

Day 3, Day 4, and Day 5

Objective: Over the next THREE days, through the skills established in Bloom's Taxonomy (Comprehension, Knowledge, Analysis, Application, Evaluation and Synthesis) the learner will develop the ability to synthesize and explain the ways in which Wealth and Social Class help perpetuate Social Inequality.

Daily Lesson Plans

Unit 4: Social Inequality

Topics:

1. Dimensions of Social Inequality.
2. The importance of Prestige.
3. The inequality in the distribution of wealth vs. income.
4. Social Stratification and Class within the US and the World.
5. Relative Poverty and who are the poor?

Vocabulary:

Student Worksheet 4.1 Wealth and Social Class Vocabulary: Teacher Worksheet 4.1 Wealth and Social Class Vocabulary or PowerPoint slides 4.1a through 4.1 k).

Procedures:

Students will use visual information and generated class discussion to comprehend how wealth and social class contribute to the problem of social inequality in America. They will complete student vocabulary exercise in an effort to define essential terminology and key concepts.

Day 3: Students will cover Unit 4.1 Vocabulary

Day 4: Unit 4.1 Class Notes

Day 5: Review Unit 4 Assignment 1; Continue Class Discussion of Unit 4.1 Essential Questions

Day 3

Place Unit 4.1 Vocabulary terms on the overhead or blackboard. Students should copy the definitions as you discuss the meanings of the vocabulary provided from Unit 4.1

Optional:

Limit assignment review and divide the class into groups. Assign each group of three or four (depending on class size, space, and time) a group of words. After each group has completed their assigned section, have students instruct others as to the definitions they found. Use class vocabulary notes to monitor accuracy.

Description

Vocabulary Terms for Unit 4.1

Unit 4: Social Inequality

Day 4 and Day 5

Motivation:

Students probably have a common sense understanding of most of the concepts associated with wealth. However, many are not aware of some of the challenges facing the different social classes, and the ways in which it becomes increasingly difficult to bridge the economic divide. Ask a series of guided questions to allow the students to formulate within themselves the set of conclusions they need to make.

Ask students to consider the question: “Is it more important to go to a prestigious university, or to hold a prestigious occupation?” Follow up the response with “Does it really matter what school a person goes to if they get a job?”

Begin to develop a list of things that are associated with a prestigious school and a list of things associated with a prestigious occupation.

Description:

Once students start to generate some discussion, allow the focus of the lesson to turn to INCOME. Students will identify that one of the major benefits of a prestigious occupation and a prestigious school is a High Income. This will allow you to segue into the discussion on Wealth vs. Income.

Lecture Support:

Class notes 4.1 will show you how one of the primary differences between classes is the distribution of wealth. (PowerPoint Slide 4.1 will be a visual). Take the person who graduates from an Ivy League school (4 years @ \$40,000) owing \$160,000 in student loans. Compare that same student with someone who graduates from the State University (4 years at \$12000). Despite the difference in prestige, which student is INITIALLY wealthier? Explain who the difference between INCOME and WEALTH, is that wealth incorporates DEBT into the equation. Obviously the student who owes \$160 thousand dollars will have less wealth than the student who owes \$48,000.

Now project a job for these two (use some of the one’s proposed from the student’s brainstorm about PRESTIGE). Show how the average starting salary for the prestigious student and average student plays an important role in how quickly a person can become wealthy.

USE slide 4.1 Income Distribution to represent how the Upper Class, the Middle Class and The Lower class face much different challenges.