



Inequality: How Did We Get Here? How Do We Go Forward?

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Civics and Economics

Keywords: economic inequality, wealth gap, redlining, economic systems, antiracism

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Why are our schools so segregated racially and concentrated economically; they reflect the communities and neighborhoods around them. School zones mirror neighborhoods, the same similarity and homogeneity in race, ethnicity, and economic factors like income and wealth. To answer how so many neighborhoods have developed this pattern, requires looking at the history of systemic racism. This unit seeks to help students explore the sources of economic inequality: in our schools, and the city and country in which they live. Two goals of this unit will be to look at the origins of these separations and economic inequalities and what we can do about it. To begin the study of economic inequality, students need a working knowledge of what an economic system is and what differentiates the different kinds of economic systems. Then, we can work to understand what was done in America in the past that led to the current inequities and how we can make changes going forward to affect change.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to (approximately 90) students in (Civics and Economics).

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Karen M. McKaig

Rationale

The Charlotte Mecklenburg School system is ranked 12th out of the 115 school systems in the state of North Carolina in diversity. This is figured by an index that includes weighing factors, mostly from the U.S. Department of Education, such as race, economic status, culture, and gender. Through this formula, CMS may look very diverse from a broad lens, but look closer and our district looks different. In CMS, more than half of all the African American and Hispanic students attend schools with less than 10% white students.(1) There is great diversity in the district as a whole, but many individual schools are not diverse. The same pattern exists in regard to economic status. Our schools have concentrations of wealth or poverty; our school system may have great variation from top to bottom, but few individual schools reflect that diversity.

Why are our schools so segregated racially and concentrated economically; they reflect the communities and neighborhoods around them. Comparing the school zones and how they mirror neighborhoods, you see the same similarity and homogeneity in race, ethnicity, and economic factors like income and wealth. To answer how so many neighborhoods have developed this pattern, requires looking at the history of systemic racism. My students will explore the sources that have and are shaping their lives, and that have created and continue to affect the city in which they live. Two goals of this unit will be to look at the origins of these separations and economic inequalities and what we can do about it.

CMS High School Socioeconomic Distribution

High School Name	% Low SES Students	% Med SES Students	% High SES Students
Ardrey Kell	0.33%	4.75%	94.91%
Phillip O. Berry	50.51%	43.35%	6.14%
Butler	19.04%	63.61%	17.35%
Cato Middle College	18.93%	59.26%	21.81%
East Meck	61.21%	21.68%	17.11%
Garinger	94.87%	4.73%	0.40%
Harding	94.66%	4.75%	0.59%
Harper Middle College	22.64%	43.40%	33.96%
Hawthorne	47.78%	45.00%	7.22%
Hopewell	13.10%	57.48%	29.43%
Independence	33.63%	47.32%	19.06%
Levine Middle College	11.02%	40.82%	48.16%
Mallard Creek	1.46%	68.65%	29.89%
Myers Park	20.65%	12.65%	66.70%
North Meck	38.40%	40.70%	20.90%
Northwest SotA	30.80%	43.41%	25.79%
Olympic	4.02%	81.09%	14.89%
Providence	0.54%	23.13%	76.34%
Rocky River	30.81%	65.56%	3.63%
South Meck	35.14%	37.08%	27.78%
Vance	40.05%	48.28%	2.67%
West Charlotte	93.45%	6.16%	0.39%
WA Hough	6.38%	21.69%	71.94%
West Meck	37.15%	61.79%	1.05%

Data from CMS SES Distribution Data Report, 2016

Demographics

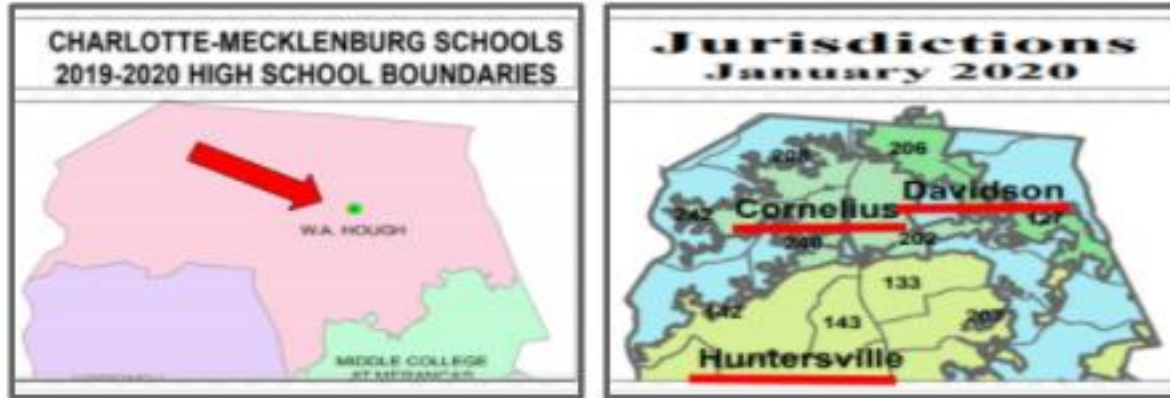
School Demographics

I will be teaching this lesson to students in my Civics and Economics (C&E) classes at William A. Hough High School (Hough). Hough had 2,493 students enrolled last year, which reflects the typical enrollment for the six years I have been there. The most recent statistics show the student population is 74% white and 26% racial minorities, composed of Hispanic (11%), Black (10%), and Asian (2%). Currently 11% of our students receive Free Lunch and 1-2% receive Reduced Lunch.(2)

Socioeconomic Status (SES) measures economics and social standing, using various factors. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system has calculated SES based on the following indicators: Family Income, Home Ownership, Parental Education, Family Composition (single/multi-parent home), and English Language (at home). The 2018-2019 CMS SES Distribution Data Report lists Hough with almost 70% of High SES students, 23% of Middle SES students, and almost 7% Low SES students.

Population	WA Hough HS	Cornelius	Huntersville	Davidson	Charlotte	Mecklenburg County	N.C.
% White	74	83	76	84	41	46	62
% Black	10	8	11	5.5	35	31	21
% Hispanic	11	5	6.5	6.5	4.5	14	9.5
Avg. Income	-	\$86k	\$94k	\$120k	\$60k	\$64k	\$54k
% Poverty	13	5.7	4.7	5	15	13	16

Hough High School pulls students from the towns of Cornelius, Huntersville, Davidson and unincorporated Mecklenburg County.



Teaching This Lesson

To Whom

This lesson is designed for the course called American History: The Founding Principles, Civics and Economics, referred to as Civics and Economics. This class is offered every day in 90 minute blocks for one semester. This course is part of the NC standard course of study and passing it is a graduation requirement. This course is offered as an Honors level course or as a Standard level course. Typically, at Hough High School, two-thirds of the C&E classes offered are Honors and one-third are Standard. Traditionally, the Honors level classes (*35-42 students per class*) are larger than the Standard level classes (*25-32 students per class*), the percentage of students opting to take the Honors level is approximately three-fourths versus one-fourth choosing to take the Standard level.

Following the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) standard course of study, most students take Civics and Economics as 10th graders, meaning my classes are mostly sophomores and 15-16 years old. However, since it is a graduation requirement, I have students from all grades enrolled. Some students who have passed the 9th grade Social Studies but not enough other courses to be promoted can be in my classes, as well as juniors and seniors who have transferred in or who are “off-sequence” due to scheduling will also be taking this course.

When

This will be taught at the end of the course since we teach the Civics portion first, covering the structure of government, key documents, and individual rights. Then, we begin teaching the basic economic conceptions and build up to economic systems, and the final units are about Personal Financial Literacy. The Economics section of my course is the only part of the NC

Standard Course of Study that economics required. There are elective Economic courses, but this one is the only one that is a graduation requirement, so all students must pass it and that makes this course and this part, very important

By teaching this Curriculum Unit at the end of the course means the students will have studied the natural and legal rights guaranteed to people living in the United States, the parts of the government charged with protecting these rights, and they will have working knowledge of basic economics so we can study what future options are being proposed to begin to address the stark economic inequality in the US today.

Connections to other courses

American History (I, II & AP, African American Studies, Psychology, Personal Finance, Economics, Statistics, some overlapping topics to Math 2 & 3 and most English courses.

Unit Goals

Our students are living in tumultuous times and they have many questions and should be asking many questions. Their lives have been upended by a pandemic that has challenged our global community and revealed deep inequities in our own country, the root of much of which lies in economic inequality. They have watched protests demanding fairness and calling for an end to police brutality toward Black and Brown members of our society, in addition to the calls for radically changing how we fund the police. These are issues that have roots in government policy, personal liberty, macroeconomics and personal finance, and my students are and will be stakeholders as these decisions are being made.

I want all of my students to understand the driving forces that have led us to this point historically, and to study the ideas and policies affecting us currently and will continue to do so in the future. With my school's population being whiter and wealthier than the rest of the county and state, there is an added importance for all of my students to understand and be educated about the systematic racism that exists, the privilege received, and the antiracist solutions being explored that affect and involve all of us.

An understanding of all of this, will involve my students' understanding economic systems, the government's role and influence in the public and private sectors. To understand economic inequality, we will start locally and look at examples where it exists in our school, city, county, state, and nation, and recognize the factors that influence it. Lastly, we will explore some of the ideas proposed to combat the causes, problems, and effects of our current economic inequality.

Unit Research

Economic and Racial Inequity In The Law

To teach a unit involving economic inequalities, research has shown me that I will need to delve deep into the legal actions and laws that have caused and exacerbated these inequalities. In my class, we already trace the Landmark court cases pivotal to the Civil Rights movement, from *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) to *Brown v Board of Ed* (1954). Our study about the history of segregation and integration of Charlotte schools also includes the case *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) that shows how the courts ordered Charlotte to change the segregation prevalent in the schools, despite the same racial segregation existing in the neighborhoods around the schools, and *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools* (1999) where it overturned *Swann*. The inability to keep a sustained policy is less the result of school will, but rather of our segregated communities. These segregated communities and neighborhoods are the result of years of policies and economic harms in these communities - harms repeated and reflected in neighborhoods all across our country.

My lessons benefit from the research on economic inequalities from Richard Rothstein in his book, *The Color of Law* (2017). Rothstein traces the history of the legislation and public policy that created the segregated nature of urban versus suburban neighbors, how that contributed to so much of the current gross economic gaps in wealth by race. This history will be covered in the “How did we get here?” part of my unit and Rothstein’s challenge from his talk at Brown University’s series called “*Structural Racism In the Shaping of American Cities*” in 2019, and needs to be addressed in the “How do we go forward?” part of my unit. From Richard Rothstein’s research “African American incomes are 60% of white incomes. African American wealth is only 10% of white wealth”.(3) He further states “and whatever the reasons are for the 60% ratio, that enormous disparity between the 60% income ratio and the 10% wealth ratio is entirely attributable to unconstitutional federal housing policy that was practiced in the mid-twentieth century, that we, all of us as American citizens, have an obligation to remedy and that we have never attempted to remedy.” I will use Rothstein’s data, among others, to show the state of economic inequality in America, and use his histories to help explain what policies then brought us to where we are now. This is all vital for the last part of the unit with my students which looks for next steps and solutions.

Exploring Solutions To Economic Racial Inequality

There are various ideas and solutions about how to address economic inequalities in our country and these vary from the simple to the very complex. According to the PEW Research Center, 66% of Americans say that our Federal Government should have a large role in reducing economic inequality and 52% of Americans think the state governments should have a lot of

responsibility in solving the problem. Americans also think the responsibility to address economic inequality lies outside of government actors, with large businesses and corporations as well as wealthy individuals receiving 52% and 46%, respectively.(4) Now, wherever the responsibility falls and whoever is involved in the solutions, there are many ideas. I have narrowed down the solutions from my research to five topics that have scholarly support and promise, are practical, and that my students will have had enough background in economics to be about to understand, defend, and debate.

More Money

The first proposed action we will explore is the plan to get people more money. This can be done by directly getting people more money and increasing pre-tax incomes, by raising the minimum wage or by evaluating factors that challenge low-income people financially, like just making it cheaper for low income people to access banks.(5) Getting more income in the hands of more low-income individuals could also be done indirectly by increasing opportunities for higher paying jobs, by opening licensure requirements and increasing access to affordable continuing and advanced education (Harwood, 2019).

Increasing the amount of income to support those in the lowest income brackets can also be done after taxes. For example, through the popular Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program. Long supported by Democrats, this program actually has deep Republican roots. It began under President Nixon and was greatly lauded and increased under President Reagan, and like both of these Republican presidents, has had many Republican supporters for the past half century. Although no action on EITC was included in this year's tax reforms, it would seem to be a policy Republicans and their base would support. In a list of the top states filing the largest percent of EITC claiming tax returns, 14 of the top 15 voted Republican in the 2016 Presidential election.(6) With bipartisan cooperation, California increased its EITC benefits through legislation introduced by a Republican and passed by a Democratic-majority legislature. This could be an effective action for Congress or other states to follow.(7)

Another after-tax solution can be achieved by levying higher taxes on the wealthy or corporations and redistributing wealth.(8) These funds could go directly to low-income families and individuals, as alluded to above or used to subsidize or offset services for which they would typically have to pay. For example, Multnomah County, home to Portland, Oregon, just passed a universal Pre-K program to provide high quality early education to all 3 and 4 year olds.(9)

The ballot measure reads:

Measure 26-214:

A "yes" vote supports establishing a tuition-free preschool program; imposing an additional 1.5% income tax on households with income over \$200,000 and an additional 3% income tax on households with income over \$400,000; and

increasing the additional rate for households with income over \$200,000 to 2.3% in 2026.(10)

The Multnomah County measure passed and should offer more than 7000 tuition-free slots over the next 6 years. The program also includes several measures to ensure that these are high-quality programs, namely increasing teacher pay in these programs to be on par with current kindergarten and elementary school teacher's salaries.(11)

The impetus for the program came from the results of a report authored by the County. The reports recognized that despite the strong and rapid economic growth that the county had been experiencing, that "the (economic) benefits have been concentrated at the top of the income ladder, while many of the county's most vulnerable residents still struggle with poverty and inadequate access to opportunities."(12) This Oregon County is clearly not alone in this economic inequality as across America the wealth gap continues to grow, even greater during Covid, but Oregon may be showing the rest of the country, with these initiatives, some new ideas and solutions.

Education

In January of 2020, PEW research released a study asking Republicans and Democrats (and those who are Republican-leaning and Democrat-leaning), to rate different measures as to how convinced they were that each could reduce economic inequality. The most popular (at 62%) and most agreed upon (less than 10% difference between them) was about education. Specifically, the economic inequality-reducing idea proposed was, "Ensuring workers have the skills they need for today's jobs." Over 80% of respondents added that it was the government's responsibility that it be high quality, K-12 education.(13)

It is not just everyday Americans who believe that education plays such a huge role, scholars agree. MIT economics professor, David Autor (2014) has a long history of looking at solutions to economic inequity and explains:

In the long run, the best policies we have involve investing in our citizenry. ... Higher education, and public education, is America's best idea. Our decision to send our entire public through high school over the first 30 years of the 20th century was probably the single most important factor in U.S. economic predominance for that century. Those investments [include] preschool, good primary and secondary schools, [and] adequate nutrition and health care.(14)

As our economic dominance falters, our global competitiveness slips, and we have so many challenges regarding education that this is an excellent time to reinvest in our education system, students, and educators.

As valuable and necessary as these reinvestments would be, reaching children earlier and younger may be a more effective use of resources. It is widely accepted that early childhood education has equalizing and long-term effects, but there is a lack of affordable, quality programs in Charlotte. This may contribute to the notorious distinction our city has for being last, ranking 50th, among the 50 largest cities in regard to upward mobility.(15) With the majority of students in Mecklenburg County attending Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools there is a target on which to focus many improvements. However, the sources for pre-K education across our area are varied and differ widely in quality. High-quality and affordable early education is even harder to find. To address this issue, there are new public-private partnerships forming, like the Howard Levine Child Development Center. They hope to be a model so other programs may be created and use their formula, which, so far, has shown success (O'Connor, 2018).

Health

The third area for possible solutions, like the prior one, is investing in people, but not just investing in the minds of our students and citizens, but in the health - the minds and bodies - of all our people. Health is, of course, related to income and how wealth allows greater access to healthier food, goods, and services. More than 73% of Americans, and even roughly half of respondents with Republican affiliation, said the government has a “responsibility to provide adequate medical care to all Americans.” (16)

The issues relating to health and availability of food and healthy food in our community are described as food insecurity and areas of food deserts. Fifteen percent of the residents of our county are affected by these challenges, compared to 11% of the nation and 13% of the state. A great resource for all sorts of information about food deserts in our communities is called the *Food Access Update* released in January 2020 from Mecklenburg County. In addition to information outlining the issue and all kinds of maps, it also provides details about resources available and evaluates how these remedies are doing. One example is a piloted partnership between Lyft ride-sharing service and our local Loaves and Fishes organization to reduce the time, challenges and burdens that many families in our community have. While the pilot program got positive feedback, it was altered in the midst of the pandemic to provide food deliveries directly to households, but the intent of stakeholders is to work to find funding and continue the program.(17)

In addition to healthier food, access to healthcare is a critical part of healthy living and one that differs greatly in relation to income. Uninsured or underinsured individuals avoid

seeking medical attention regularly because of the costs. This lack of routine visits means that individuals are missing the chance to catch medical issues early and, therefore, lack the benefits that could be provided by preventative medicine. Both of which mean that when they do eventually seek care, their condition has become more serious and requires more measures. This often costs more, recreating the vicious cycle (Cunningham, 2018)

The challenges from physical medical issues and lack of care, are only part of the medical crisis for low income households. The CDC's Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults, highlighted many mental health issues that occur more frequently in people with lower income levels. In one part of the study, participants were asked about their negative feelings. Participants earning less than \$35,000 were far more likely to harbor these feelings than respondents earning more than \$100,000. The poor participants in the study were 5½ times more likely to feel sadness all or most of the time, 9 times more likely to feel hopeless most or all of the time, and more than 6 times more likely to feel worthlessness, than the wealthier citizens in the study. These findings are consistent across the country and align with studies done internationally. Recently, the added stress of Covid 19 has exacerbated these latent causes of mental unhealth in studies from America and the United Kingdom.(19) There is strong evidence that economic inequality hurts our collective mental health by breaking down the "social cohesion" of our society for all economic levels creating deep effects on trust and feelings of community (20).

Infrastructure

The next solution is one we have heard a lot about during the campaign season, and that is infrastructure. Infrastructure investment would be a boost to businesses, state and local governments, and their economies with new, rebuilt, and improved roads, bridges, railroads, and airports. In addition the improvement to the lives of Americans, particularly to lower income Americans would be substantial (Harwood, 2019). Another part of this solution would be to reimplement all parts of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule of 2015. The rule begins by providing local and state governments "with an effective planning approach to aid them in taking meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination."(21) Its purpose was to guarantee that all members of the community would have equal access to transportation, housing, and other government services by having the local government scrutinize their own accessibility and practices. Under the rule, local governments collected data, mapped community facilities and housing, and then were required to report these findings to the federal government with proposed solutions. That part of the rule was suspended in 2018, and it was canceled this summer.

The last and very critical aspect to infrastructure investment is obvious to every teacher facing the challenges of virtual learning. Teachers see how their students' learning is hurt by the inequities of fast and strong digital connections and internet access.

With workplaces and schools shut down, hundreds of millions of people around the globe have become reliant on digital infrastructure — especially broadband Internet networks — for their jobs, education, healthcare visits, and social interactions. However, in both the United States and the United Kingdom, deployment of this critical infrastructure (and access to it) is controlled by a small (and shrinking) oligopoly of large for-profit telecommunications corporations. This has led to inadequate service and severe inequality. For instance, tens of millions of Americans, many in rural areas, do not have access to a broadband connection with bare minimum speeds, and Internet access in the country is far slower and more expensive than in most other advanced countries. And even when broadband is available, high costs often make it unaffordable for many families. For instance, in some urban areas, up to 30 percent of households do not have an internet connection. In the current crisis, this has put those communities at a tremendous disadvantage when compared to wealthier (and often whiter) communities, especially in terms of education. (Hanna, 2020)

Intellectual Property

The last of the solutions my students will research will be regarding an increased protection of intellectual property. Economist David Autor has a keen interest in studying the powers that shape economic inequality. He cautions about how many job losses and overall financial losses our country suffers at the hands of corporate intellectual piracy from foreign countries.(22) While this is becoming increasingly a costly and common problem in the technological world, in addition to foreign theft, we have limited our own intellectual property rights, by pure racism. Our country has a long history of intellectual property suppression of and theft from African Americans that disadvantages us all.(23) Nobel Prize-winning research by Paul Romer has shown through measuring the number of patents and inventions, and thus new innovation, a direct connection to national economic growth. Dr. Lisa Cook's research expounds on this, showing the connection between the history of racial injustices and economic growth in America. She has shown that in the periods of our most heightened and open racial violence and racial oppression towards African Americans there were decreases in the amount of patents applied for by African Americans. This created fewer patents overall, less innovation, and this depression of invention coincides with the slowest periods of American economic growth (Cook, 2013).

Strategies For Increasing Engagement In Social Studies

One of the most gratifying parts of teaching Social Studies is getting to use so many amazing primary documents. I remember in college how my whole opinion of history changed after a visit to the Rare Book Room and Manuscript Library tucked away on a top floor of the Duke library. I had never “seen” and connected to history that way before and the idea that you can view and interpret a document, an artifact, yourself, I found very liberating. Although I would love to sneak all of my students up to that Hogwarts-like back room, the virtual world has provided even more access to documents than could ever be found in any one library. Analyzing primary documents is something that is part of my teaching now, and something I plan to use with my unit. Additionally, using online documents and artifacts has become an important aspect of the remote education we are currently practicing.

One such example in my lessons utilizes primary documents that have been made available online. The use of redlining in city development shows the systematic racism that limited the opportunities of African Americans to buy new homes and created much of the segregation that still exists in our cities today. Digitalizing the HOLC [REDLINING MAPS](#) (24) has made it possible to see the historic neighborhood level “grades” assigned to different areas of a city and to see the resulting economic status of these neighborhoods now, with just clicks on the computer. Looking at the 1940s geographic outlines of the neighborhoods in cities across the nation and the graphics comparing the amount of “Desirable” neighborhoods to those that are not, you can find similarities to the property values in many neighborhoods today. These clear visual comparisons from then to today, show how much some of our communities were labeled and denied economic opportunities and others were labeled for growth.

For this unit, students will look at primary documents from the beginning of the class with a specific lens toward equality. We will take a detailed look at the complete text of the Fourteenth Amendment which is the foundation for anti-discrimination cases and was created for the betterment of African Americans, and now affects every American every day. I am also going to use excerpts from other founding documents in addition to several Supreme Court cases.

Strategies For Incorporating Antiracist Teaching

An interesting connection I want to build my lessons around is the combination of Antiracist thinking and role-playing. I found lessons that combined these two ideas by Ursula Wolfe-Rocca with the Zinn Education Project. One lesson focused on “Redlining in American Cities” and the other on Reparations where the students act as members of Congress and work to edit and pass the bill, which reinforces another part of my curriculum.(25) The topics are thought-provoking and the lessons are very well done and, as excited as I was to explore them, I did

wonder what effect these intense and conflict-based lessons could have on my students. I was concerned whether using role-playing lessons with these confrontational parts of our history might unintentionally undermine the lessons I was teaching. I worried whether they might create injury, resentment, or embarrassment.

Clearly, I want students to “live” in the issues for a bit and to reflect on how they affect our lives and our history. On the other hand, I don’t want the activities to increase stereotypes that students may already wrongly have, or create discomfort or any feeling of a lack of efficacy in my minority students who experience the effects of systematic racism daily. Many education journals are discussing the need for and merits of Interest teaching. Also, role-playing and changing perspective are popularly suggested as engaging teaching practices, but little was written about both and very little from a research perspective. However, Josette McGregor had been asking these questions and has found many answers to the effect on students in a study called the *Effectiveness of Role Playing and Antiracist Teaching in Reducing Student Prejudice*. (26)

The study found that there was a positive relationship between role-playing strategies and students' empathy and understanding. McGregor theorizes that causing cognitive dissonance in the students is one key to their ability to learn and grow from the experience. Combining antiracist lessons with role-playing and other interactive strategies was found to help students see the big-picture view and global effect of racism (Zamalin, 2019), and the results were consistent through all age levels. Antiracist topics illustrate the existence of racism in the many economic and governmental institutions familiar to them. The role-playing seeks to help them reflect inwardly, by challenging *their own* conceptions of the world by making them see life from a different view. Helping students see the world from a new lens can be done many ways, but researched the effect of two specific ways that I wanted to use in my lessons. One option is using dramatizations or individual biographies (real or fictional) that make students empathize and evaluate the choices and decisions of another person. Another option to challenge students' thinking is called the “forced-compliance” situation. This is where the student is “forced” to argue, defend, or debate a position which is not their own. The work of preparing their new, assigned position forces them to analyze and evaluate new realities from another point of view. These higher order thinking skills would be good challenges for my students with any subject matter, and one we frequently employ. It was valuable to find evidence that using an antiracist approach and the teaching strategies I wanted to use, had been shown to decrease racist and prejudicial feelings.(27)

My research also addressed my concerns about the possibility of negative outcomes that could happen in regards to the minds and feelings of students in both the racial minority or majority through these norm-challenging activities. McGregor cited, adding structure to the lessons will decrease the chance of negative effects. For example, using scripts and detailed

roles and “life histories” with dramatizations and role-playing activities to prevent students from “ad-libbing” intentionally or unintentionally in harmful stereotypical ways.

Another concern is the reality of the heaviness and heartbreak of teaching centuries of injustices within an Antiracist curriculum, and the challenge to do so without creating a story of victims. McGregor’s studies show that this can be effectively balanced with focus on the many heroes who practiced resistance in actions and thought. A plea preached by Bettina Love in her comments on the *Repurposing Our Pedagogies Webinar* from the Education for Liberation Network aired June 2, 2020, stresses this as well. “You better know our joy, Black people’s joy, our resilience, who we are, what we have done. Because without that, you are just telling half the story and you are dehumanizing us and are also anti-black.”(28) The stories of resilience, overcoming obstacles, and joy, need to be a critical part of these lessons.

The last factor impeding the effectiveness of these antiracist lessons was “if teachers are ill-equipped to discuss this subject with students (McGregor)”. These show the same concerns as the calls for more antiracist education that are spreading widely on the national level and are exemplified on our local level with our seminar in CTI.

Instructional Implementation

To begin the study of economic inequality, my students need a working knowledge of what an economic system is, what differentiates the different kinds of economic systems, and what kind of economic system the United States has. Then, we can work to understand what was done in America in the past that led to the current inequities and how we can make changes going forward to affect change. We will use prior knowledge from earlier in the course to briefly review and connect to the founding documents that should promote and protect equality, but view those with a lens of economic interests. We will focus the rest of the unit on the current wealth gap and economic inequality: the evidence for it, the creation of it, and possible answers to reverse these inequities in the future.

LESSON 1: Winter is Coming: I Want A Toboggan - 1 Day

bit.ly/Lesson12020CTI

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What do we know about the American Economy? Why are there so many different economic terms used to describe it?

Day 1: Warm-up: “I Want A Toboggan” is a way for us to begin the discussion about different words meaning different things to different people, and why this happens and where our core ideas and views come from.

Pre-Assessment Activity: Before the unit begins, the students will do some pre-work and think about what they know or think they know about the US economy. This gives them a chance to think about the topic and give me a chance to see what they know, don’t know, and what questions they have. For this pre-assessment, students will create a “4-3-2-one-pager”. It is assessed for what they think they know and want to know, not accuracy at this point. We will conclude the unit with a similar exercise for comparison.

The format for this assignment, which is familiar to my students, is all on one page, and includes:

- 4 words they choose to explain about the topic,
- 3 images that help show what they think,
- 2 ideas explaining what they think (written in complete sentences),
- 1 question they have.

Reflections and Review: After creating their 4-3-2-one-pagers, the students will take their individual assignment and first in pairs/small groups, and then as a class, we will create a list of the words that were used most often to describe the American economy and what we think about it. Throughout the activity, students can add, but not remove from their “pager”. Mass media use different and varied terms to describe our economy and economic system; politicians, teachers, even economists, do as well, so the fact that our list has a variety of terms on it will not be a surprise, but an opportunity.

We will discuss, and then journal, on these questions and ideas from their paper and others. Why are so many different terms used? Who is using them? Where do their views come from? What is their motivation?

LESSON 2: Is this a “Death By Chocolate Cake”? - 2 days bit.ly/Lesson22020CTI

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is an economic system? How does different government involvement define the different types of economic systems?

Day 2: Warm-up: “Death By Chocolate Cake” : The goal is to show on a spectrum how the amount of government intervention varies in different countries and the degree of involvement defines the type of economy.

Activity: : Students will make a T-chart comparing services they use and consume and where they come from. We will define and use the terms public sector versus private sector, and categorize the goods and services we consume as to whether they are provided by the government (national, state, or local) or by private sector companies, businesses, or individuals.

Assignment: We will go over the types of economic systems and based on the characteristics of each, place them on a spectrum based on the amount of government involvement.

Reflection and Review: Students will watch the video clip Crash Course: Economic Systems and Macroeconomics that will review the types of economies that went over today and connect the types of economic systems to examples of countries that have them.

Day 3: Warm-up: Analyze the graph: Study the PEW research graph about different economies and their citizens' satisfaction and compare that to the type of economy.

Activity: Students will participate in a production simulation reviewing the economic systems from the day before that will mimic the different economic systems and their advantages and disadvantages. After the simulation, the students will compile their results on a chart and we will discuss and debrief.

Assignment: Students will complete Bubble Note Graphic Organizer with important facts and ideas about each thinker using the text or other secondary source. Then add to the graphic organizer, four economic quotes that relate to at least one of their notes.bubbles, and connect the bubbles with a new line.

Reflection and Review: Students will review the characteristics of each economic system and real-world examples of each through interactive Google slides, paired with a think-pair-share to compare their answers.

LESSON 3: Equality and Equal Protection - 2 Days

bit.ly/Lesson32020CTI

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

Do we have the right to equality? Can we find where American “equality” is promised or guaranteed?

Can we find inequality in America? Do we have a problem with economic inequality?

Day 4: Warm-up: Primary Document Reading: 14th Amendment. The students will read and annotate the 14th Amendment and discuss whether equality is guaranteed? What kind? To whom? What did it mean then and now?

Activity: Students will use primary documents (The Declaration of Independence, Federalist 10, The Constitution) to review the founding documents of our country that speak to equality and then share their findings with each other in a jig-saw activity. We will use the 14th Amendment from warm-up to model an example. In round one, small groups will together go through their assigned document and finish the open-ended phrase, “Equality, according to _____ (their document) is...” In round two, the groups being reassigned with one member representing each document, will share what their round one, and discuss with their new group. After sharing, each student will complete an “Equality Is” statement for each document and then craft one based on “Equality, according to TO ME is...”

Reflections and Review: Students will listen to and read the poem Equality, by Maya Angelou, then journal comparing the poem to all the written examples of equality from the primary documents we analyzed.

Day 5: Warm up: Compare the two graphs GRAPH: 1% vs 40% and GRAPH: 1% vs .01% and note two trends you see in each graph to excerpts from the article from Chicago University Booth School of Business article, “Nevermind the 1 percent, Let’s talk about .01%”.

Activity: Students will research economic inequality on the National, State, Local level, and between CMS schools.

Reflections and Review: Combining their definitions of what equality should look like to them and the data from the research, the students will prepare a memo advising a public official (in national, state, local government or to an official of CMS) about the state of economic equality and inequality in our country.

LESSON 4: Steps and Missteps: How did we get here? - 3 Days bit.ly/Lesson42020CTI

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

*What are the laws and court cases that set precedents for economic racial inequality?
What laws and policies were put in place that directly or indirectly created economic racial inequality?*

Day 6-8: Warm-up: Students will watch Episode 3- How the Racial Gap Was Created, from the video series, Race- The Power of an Illusion.

Activity: As a class, we will look at the practice of Redlining through the detailed maps of Charlotte, NC, from the 1940s and an example of discriminatory policies.

Activity: Through the Zinn Projects lesson, “*How Red Lines Built White Wealth: A Lesson on Housing Segregation in the 20th Century*,” designed by Ursula Wolfe-Rocca and based on Richard Rothstein’s *The Color of Law*. Students will be assigned roles, and through the “role play” mixer will questions and learn from each other.

Activity: Then finish with research on court decisions and discriminatory policy and how it divested or discriminated against their family or them.

Reflections and Review: Students will present their findings by displaying them on a jamboard for all students to access and review in an online “Gallery Walk” collaboratively after the “mixer”. Individually, they will complete the Steps and Missteps graphic organizer.

LESSON 5: What's Next? - 2 Days

bit.ly/Lesson52020CTI

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

How do we address the economic inequalities and gaps in racial wealth? What are our next steps? What are suggested options?

Day 9-10: Warm-up: Students will read and listen to 5 ways to fight wealth inequality, according to economists by John Harwood.

Activity: In class, we will focus on five ideas that have been widely discussed as possible solutions and involve aspects of the economy and economic concepts covered by our curriculum. In groups, mimicking the legislative process, students will focus on one of the possible solutions and will write a law proposing legislation to Congress to address economic inequality. Each bill will include historical background and current data in addition to their proposed solutions.

Culminating Activity: Student groups will present their bill and we will vote as a class on their proposals.

Reflect and Review:

Listen to *Bill Gates and Rashida Jones Ask BIG Questions* podcast. Episode 2, "Is Inequality Inevitable?", 2020.

Post-unit: After the unit, students will create a new "4-3-2--one-pager" reflecting on what they have learned and now know about the American economy and wealth in this country. This will include their thoughts about what they think differently about, what they learned, and again will include images of their choosing to explain their thoughts.

The format for this "4-3-2-one-pager" assignment, includes:

- 4 words they choose related to what they think about our economy,
- 3 images that help show what they think,
- 2 ideas explaining what they think (written in complete sentences),
- 1 question they have.

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

American History: The Founding Principles - Civics and Government

These objectives are part of the lessons that deal with the primary documents, analyzing them or the promise and protect of equality under the law, as well as how those laws have been used to protect and not protect people throughout our history, and lastly the process of making those laws and the current issues around economic inequality and the policies that are part of the solutions.

FP.C&G.1.4 Analyze the principles and ideals underlying American democracy in terms of how they promote freedom.

FP.C&G.2.7 Analyze contemporary issues and governmental responses at the local, state, and national levels and how they promote the public interest and/or general welfare.

FP.C&G.3.1 Analyze how the rule of law establishes limits on both the governed and those who govern while holding to the ideal of equal protection under the law (14th A)

FP.C&G.3.4 Explain how individual rights are protected by varieties of law

FP.C&G.3.6 Explain ways laws have been influenced by political parties, constituents, interest groups, lobbyists, the media and public opinion

FP.C&G.3.8 Evaluate the rights of individuals in terms of how well those rights have been upheld by democratic gov in the US

American History: The Founding Principles - Personal Financial Literacy

These objectives are in the parts of the lessons where we break down the policies that discriminated against and divested in the neighborhoods of racial minorities and black and brown people themselves, and the continued deep consequences from denying financial opportunity, stability, and the growth of financial assets and wealth.

FP.PFL.1.1 Explain how education, income, career, and life choices impact an individual's financial plan and goals.

FP.PFL.1.6 Compare various investing strategies and tax implications for their potential to build wealth.

American History: The Founding Principles - Economics

These objectives are part of the lessons that explain the economic system that we had and have in the United States, what the types of economies are and the factors that influence and define economic systems, as well as in the solutions part of the lessons where we look to options we can pursue, economically, to effect change in the vast economic inequality that currently exists.

FP.E.1.2 Analyze a market economy in terms of economic characteristics, the roles they play in decision-making and the importance of each role

FP.E.1.6 Compare national, state and local economic activity

Student Resources:

For court cases:

<https://www.oyez.org/> . *The first “go-to” for any search or questions about any Supreme Court Case or topic.*

<https://law.justia.com/cases/>. *Great website also, would use this if you want to read the decisions, easier to find.*

For information about CMS schools:

CMS SES DISTRIBUTION DATA Report,

[https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/StudentPlacement/PlanningServices/Documents/2018-19%20Socioeconomic%20Status%20\(SES\).pdf](https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/StudentPlacement/PlanningServices/Documents/2018-19%20Socioeconomic%20Status%20(SES).pdf)

US NEWS & World Report

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/north-carolina/districts/charlotte-mecklenburg-schools/william-amos-hough-high-92155>

PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/diversity-rankings-stats/north-carolina/h>

Video Resources:

Race - The Power of an Illusion, Episode 3- How the Racial Gap Was Created.

A very powerful series, with this episode focusing on the visible and hidden that advanced white people and discriminated, disadvantaged, and institutionalized racist policies and the effects today.

5 Ways To Fight Wealth Inequality, According To Economists, by Harwood, John, CNBC, JUN 19 2019.

Article and video, quick intro to some ideas that provide solutions to decreasing economic inequality.

Podcast Resources:

Bill Gates and Rashida Jones Ask BIG Questions podcast. Episode 2, 2020. “Is Inequality Inevitable?”

Enjoyable mix of discussion and guess researchers who give data and current research.

PATENT RACISM: Planet Money (Podcast Episode 1008),

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/12/876097416/patent-racism> - Based Dr. Lisa Cook’s research.

Great breakdown for Cooks novel research blending economics, history, and racism.

PLANET MONEY - Rethinking Black Wealth. (October, 2020).

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcyc5ucHIub3JnLzUxMDI4OS9wb2RjYXN0LnhtbA==/episode/NDE2MzVhNzEtYmE2Yy00YjkwLTk5MDUtZmU0Mzk4ZGIxM2Ey>

Teacher Resources

HOLC “Redlining” Maps: The Persistent Structure Of Segregation And Economic Inequality
Bruce Mitchell PhD., Senior Research Analyst and Juan Franco, Senior GIS Specialist, NCRC /
March 20, 2018 / Research

Although the concepts and the language used in the posted documents is disturbing, it really lets the students and you, to look at an exact neighbor and what the ratings mean and see the ones marked for growth and not. What did they look for? And today, how are they doing?

“Inequality and Health.” Inequality.org, 19 Feb. 2020, inequality.org/facts/inequality-and-health/. <https://inequality.org/facts/inequality-and-health/>

This article was helpful to me, but the website “Inequality.oeg” is great for you and the students. In varying length, articles present clear issues and always have a link to proposed solutions and current ideas.

Zamalin, Alex. ANTIRACISM: An Introduction, NYU Press. March 2019.

This was one of the fundamental texts from our Seminar and it is great. The final two chapters will be favorites for social studies teachers or lovers of history

Rothstein, Richard. The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America. New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017.

Great Book, explains everything and is the basis for the Zinn Project role-play lesson.

Richard Rothstein, speaking at Lecture Series “Structural Racism In The Shaping Of American Citie,” Brown University, February 2019.

If you don’t have time or interest in reading the book, this hits big points and is really engaging.

The Power of an Illusion. (2003). The Growth of the Suburbs and the Racial Wealth Gap, from <https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/lessons/growth-suburbs-and-racial-wealth-gap>

Great Resources along with lessons and ideas that are companions to the powerful video series.

TEACHING MATERIALS from the ZINN EDUCATION PROJECT

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/how-red-lines-built-white-wealth-color-of-law-lesson>

Great lessons and resources that are constantly being created and get on their free emailer.

ECHO Foundation- Charlotte: A Tale of Two Cities <http://www.echofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Charlotte-A-Tale-of-Two-Cities.pdf>

This fantastic program has student interns amass amazing resources each year that go along with their annual speaker. If you are a high school teacher and have a chance to get connected at your school I suggest it. Their website has past years resources compiled and worth a look.

<https://www.vox.com/2018/1/8/16822374/school-segregation-gerrymander-map>

This website had a mapping technology to get data about your school district and the neighborhoods in them and around each school. Very powerful.

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