

SOCIAL JUSTICE LESSON PLAN

UNIT TWO

Systems and Power: SCHOOL

UNIT OVERVIEW: In this unit, students will use fiction, poetry, essays, films, music, art and more to explore the role that school plays in our lives and in our society. Students will be asked to consider the ways in which school opens doors for some, and shuts them for others. We will also examine school as a system that operates with and for power. This unit will provide students with examples of the ways in which school uses power, passes power on, and withholds power from some through course offerings, curriculum content, text choices, lenses, discipline, rewards, and policies. We will regularly visit the questions:

Who benefits and who loses?

Who has the power and who doesn't? Why?

What is another perspective?

We will also explore the ways that language, literacy, technology, and physical space is used to leverage and control students in, through, and out of school.

I want students to grapple with the ways in which school has or hasn't worked for them and the people around them. I want them to take a critical look at their education and push back on what they've been told about the world and why.

We will begin the unit with a look at a current topic in education. This may be a look at the controversial decision of the College Board to erase African history before colonization from the AP curriculum. It may also be an exploration of how the Raza program in Arizona was eradicated, through the lens of the movie *Precious Knowledge*. I will use Linda Christenson's activity ideas from her *Warriors Don't Cry* lesson to move the students through an understanding of the players, the conflict, the perspectives, the context, and the actions. We will use a variety of sources to examine the issue from a multitude of perspectives.

While we are exploring this topic, students will be collecting evidence and ideas to use in their essays, as outlined in the chapter in *Joy and Justice* on writing essays (dialogue journals, character silhouettes, retrieval charts, response papers, journal entries, letters, writing prompts, poster talks, etc).

Students will also select some texts to read, listen to, or watch on a topic of their choice. They will continue to take notes, write, and discuss their topics as a way of collecting thoughts and evidence for their essays.

We will go through the process of brainstorming, organizing, writing, and rewriting essays on their selected topics. Lessons on writing and mechanics will be embedded in the lessons as I also guide them through deep, rigorous thinking about their topics.

The unit will culminate with a project modeled off of Christensen's Into the World Project.

Driving Questions:	Essential Understandings:	Standards:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ What is power? ★ How is power gained, shared, and maintained? ★ Where should power be? ★ How do systems work? ★ What is a quality education? ★ What is education for? ★ How does education work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Power means different things to different people. ★ Power can be distributed in many different ways. ★ Systems are complicated, complex, and intersectional. ★ Systems can change. ★ Not all education is equal. ★ Education plays an important role in our lives. 	<p>MN State Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 11.9.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions ★ 11.9.7.7 Understand, analyze, evaluate, and use different types of print, digital, and multimodal media ★ 11.7.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. <hr/> <p>Social Justice Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ JU.9-12.12 I can recognize, describe and distinguish unfairness and injustice at different levels of society.
Assessments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Formative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essay (JJ 120-155) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students will be asked to write a lot in this unit. They will write prompts, poems, journal entries, and more. The essay will be a way for students to organize their thinking about the big content ideas of the unit, which will be an entry point to their Into the World project. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Summative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mini Into the World (JJ 259-261) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ YPAR ■ Students will select a topic related to school and power and develop a lesson, Ted Talk-style presentation, or an advocacy plan to educate others. 		

Texts:

- ★ Reading (*books, essays, articles, poetry, short stories, blogs, social media, etc*):
 - Warriors Don't Cry (JJ pg. 161-188)
 - Frederick Douglass
 - Reading Lolita in Tehran
 - I Am Malala
 - Baldwin - A Letter To Teachers
 - Declaration of Human Rights
 - Others...?
 - The history of education in America
 - Dewey
 - Histories/interviews/accounts of school integration, Indian boarding schools, indigenous schools in Australia

- ★ Listening (*music, podcasts*):
 - 3 Miles
 - The Problem We All Live With
 - Harper High School
 - A Talk With Teachers
 - Others...?

- ★ Viewing (*films, shows, clips, visual art*):
 - Precious Knowledge
 - The Bad Kids
 - Separation and Unequal
 - Boys of Baraka
 - Daughters of Destiny
 - Others...?

Learning activities:

- ★ Writing for Justice (JJ 161-188)
- ★ Role Play (JJ 169-179)
- ★ Language and Power (JJ 208-217)
- ★ Station activities using a variety of school-related experiences, such as going to school with a disability, LGBTQ experiences, ELL experiences, etc.
- ★ Book clubs
- ★ The worst school
- ★ School history timeline
- ★ Writing prompts and activities
- ★ Journals
- ★ Socratic seminars, circles, discussion

Reflection:

This unit addresses issues of social justice by asking students to examine a system (school) that plays an important role in their lives for evidence of ways in which it uses and abuses power. Students will look at education from a variety of lenses, so that they can approach a critical examination of school with many different perspectives and in different contexts. The unit asks students to consider fairness and justice in a system they are intimately a part and product of. The unit culminates in a project that promotes activism and education.

I am deeply committed to getting students to see the world in which they live and operate clearly. I believe that the purpose of education should be to facilitate students' exploration and critical analysis of the world around them so that they are better equipped to navigate it and ultimately improve upon it. Asking students to examine an institution that they operate in and that operates on them in a critical way asks students to consider the ways in which their lives are shaped by the ways in which power is distributed and to empower them to take their power back and refuse to passively let systems act on them. The unit asks them to take an immediate, educated, and active role in their own lives.

I am certainly anxious about this work. I want the unit to be meaningful and significant, but I am worried about getting lost in the process. I am very inspired by Linda Christensen's writing, but I know that I can't replicate her work. For me, the challenge will be to remain inspired by her work, but also make sure I am staying true to myself, my style, and content that I am passionate and knowledgeable about.