

LOCAL HUNGER

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Lesson Plan: Local hunger in the elementary classroom

Rationale

Hidden on city streets, in community neighbourhoods, and school corridors is an issue that is invisible to the naked eye. Often thought of as a world problem, plaguing far away countries and faceless individuals, this problem tends to be overlooked in our own hometowns. This issue is hunger.

In 2010, the number of people who sought assistance from local food banks increased to an all time high, while at the same time, the amount of donations given to food banks dropped. Without this needed outreach from the community, food banks were left struggling to find solutions. This lesson is designed to help educators and students explore local hunger issues before working together to determine solutions to this hidden problem.

This lesson plan consists of three parts: orientation, core, concluding and extension activities followed by an assessment rubric (Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric for Student Work). Each activity focuses on student-centered learning and encourages the use of inquiry and critical thinking skills. For a comprehensive understanding of hunger, teach this lesson in sequence, as a small unit plan, or if you have less class time, select one activity from each section.

After completing this lesson, students will emerge as knowledgeable and enthusiastic advocates for change, eager to take action and engage their community on this important domestic issue.

Details

- **Grade level:** elementary
- **Themes:** poverty, hunger, needs, wants, campaigning, awareness, community.
- **Estimated time:** 160 minutes
- **Learning goals**
 - Students will:
 - Determine the difference between a “need” and a “want”.
 - Participate in active group work and class discussions.
 - Engage in a role play activity.
 - Learn about hunger in their community, including the causes and impacts.
 - Explore the purpose and use of a food bank.
 - Learn what they can do to fight local hunger.
- **Resources required**
 - Grocery store fliers
 - Chart paper
 - Magazines
 - Scissors



- Glue
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Computers and internet
- **Assessment**
 - Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric for Student Work

Local Hunger: “Needs” versus “Wants” Activity

Orientation Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to develop an understanding of the differences between needs and wants. Students will also recognize that food is a basic human need.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students use written language instead of verbal language, writing their responses down on paper.
 - Instead of cutting images out of magazines that represent needs and wants, students draw pictures using drawing utensils.
- **Estimated time:** 20-25 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students: when they find themselves saying “I need ...,” what are those things? Make a list of needs on the board.
 2. As a class, create a definition of a “need”, and record the definition on the board.
 3. Ask students: when they find themselves saying “I want ...,” what are those things? Make a list of wants on the board.
 4. As a class, create a definition of a “want” and record the definition on the board.
 5. Divide students into groups of four and distribute chart paper, magazines, glue, scissors and markers to each group.
 6. In their groups, ask students to look through magazines and cut out any pictures that they feel represent a need or a want.
 7. As a group, students must cooperatively sort their cut out pictures into “needs” and “wants”, and create a display with their pictures on their chart paper using the glue and markers.
 8. Once groups have completed their displays, gather the class back together for an activity debrief, using these suggested questions.
 - What are some examples of items you listed as needs?
 - What are some examples of items you listed as wants?
 - Did your group disagree on any of these items?
 - What category does food belong to? Why?
 9. Before the conclusion of the activity, ensure students recognize that food is a need necessary for survival.
 10. Display completed projects around the classroom as a reminder of the differences between needs and wants.

Local Hunger: Hunger Webs Activity

Orientation Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to explore hunger issues.
- **Instructional method(s):** group work, class discussion.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - The classroom teacher creates the hunger web, as students volunteer suggestions.
- **Estimated time:** 20-25 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students to get into groups of four and distribute chart paper to each group.
 2. Explain to students that they will be creating a “hunger web”, which will list all of the words, statements, and facts that they associate with hunger (e.g.: starvation, money, nutrition, etc.)
 3. Each group must write the word “hunger” in the center of the page and draw a circle around it. They must then write their ideas around the circle, joining them by a line, thus creating a web.
 4. Once the groups have completed their hunger webs, ask each group to present their work to the class.
 5. Following this exercise, lead a group discussion about food and hunger, using the following suggested questions:
 - How is hunger defined?
 - What symptoms do people experience when they are hungry? (e.g.: fatigue, bad mood, anxiety, low energy, etc.)
 - How does hunger affect an individual’s daily life? (e.g.: impacts on health, absences from work/school, less energy to study, etc.)
 - What are some of the reasons why a person in your community would go hungry?
 - Is there anything that we can do in our community to help people that are experiencing hunger? What are these things?
 - Thinking about these things we already do in our community, where do you still see areas of need? What more can we do?
 6. Before concluding this activity, ensure that students have a thorough understanding of the causes and effects of hunger.
 7. Display the hunger webs around the room.

Local Hunger: The Food I Eat Activity

Core Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to gain an understanding around the cost of the food they eat and what constitutes a healthy diet. With this knowledge they will begin to understand that there are many reasons why people experience hunger.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students work in groups instead of individually.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Collect fliers from your local grocery store.
 2. Begin by leading a discussion around the importance of a healthy diet, using the following suggested questions:
 - What is a healthy diet? What does a healthy diet consist of? Write suggestions on the board.
 - What are the benefits of having a healthy diet?
 - What are the consequences of an unhealthy diet?
 3. Distribute grocery store fliers and blank pieces of paper to each student in the class.
 4. Ask students to volunteer examples of the food they normally eat in a day. Write suggestions on the board.
 5. Students must flip through the grocery store fliers and create a grocery list of the food they will need to buy in order to feed themselves for the day. On their blank piece of paper, ask them to record the type of food, as well as the quantity and price. When this is complete, ask students to calculate the total cost of their groceries.
 6. Ask students to present their grocery list to the class. Lead a discussion around the food they eat using the following questions:
 - Were you surprised by the total price of your daily groceries?
 - If that was the price of your groceries for one day, how much would it cost to have those groceries for one week? Does this surprise you?
 - Is there anything you can cut out of your grocery list to make it more affordable?
 - Were some foods more expensive than others? If so, which ones? Can this affect your healthy diet?
 - What does a family need to take into account when they grocery shop? (e.g.: income, budget, maintaining a balanced diet, etc.)
 7. Move the discussion onto reasons why families might not be able to afford this food, by asking:
 - What other expenses does a family need to think about aside from food? How can this impact their choices? (e.g.: rent, transportation, bills, etc.)
 - What are some reasons that could cause this family to be unable to afford their weekly groceries?

Teacher note: As you conduct this discussion, keep in mind that some root causes of hunger include: deep and persistent poverty caused by a shortage of full-time jobs with stable living wages; lack of affordable social housing; lack of affordable and accessible child care, etc.

8. Debrief students' feelings, by asking:
 - Have you learned anything new about hunger in your community?
 - Did anything upset you?

Teacher Note: At this time, it is important to keep in mind that some students and/or their family members may themselves have experienced hunger as an ongoing issue, and perhaps visited food banks themselves. Therefore, ask the class to be sensitive and considerate during this discussion

Local Hunger: Food Banks Activity

Core Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to understand that there are solutions to hunger issues in their community, and that there are organizations that offer support to people in this situation.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will volunteer verbal answers instead of writing their responses on sticky notes.
- **Estimated time:** 20-25 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Explain to students that when people in their community suffer from hunger, they have options and places they can go to ensure they do not go hungry. Ask the question: "Where can people go in your community to access food?"
 2. Promote a class discussion around food banks, by asking:
 - What is a food bank?
 - What do you find at a food bank?
 - What do we donate to a food bank?
 - Who uses a food bank?
 - Why are food banks important?
 3. On chart paper write the title "Food Bank" and distribute three sticky notes to each student.
 4. On each sticky note have students write the following:
 - One question that they have about food banks.
 - One reason why they appreciate food banks.
 - One way that they can support their local food bank.
 5. When the students have completed their sticky notes, ask them to come to the front of the room and post them on the chart paper.
 6. After each student has had a chance to post their sticky notes, go over the display as a class. Discuss student answers and any outstanding questions about food banks.
 7. Explain to students that food banks began over 30 years ago as a short term solution to local hunger. Now, they are a necessity in Canada. Each month over 800,000 Canadians receive food from a food bank, a number that has increased significantly over the last ten years. Explain to students that currently there are over 900 food banks and 2,900 affiliated agencies in Canada. However, these food banks need our help as they rely on the generosity of the community.
 8. Read the following list to reveal current struggles faced by Canadian food banks and some of the ways they are coping with these struggles:
 - 27% of food banks lack adequate funding.
 - 31% of food banks do not have enough food to meet the needs.
 - 50% of food banks have been forced to give out less food than usual.
 - 57% bought more food than usual to meet the need.
 - Nearly half of food banks in Canada have no paid staff.
 - 15% report difficulty recruiting enough volunteers to manage everyday operations

Teacher note: these statistics were taken from Food Banks Canada, Hunger Count 2010

<http://www.cafb-acba.ca/main2.cfm?id=10718648-B6A7-8AA0-6A3C6F3CAC0124E1>



9. At this time promote a discussion around what students can do individually and as a class to fight to the local hunger problem and contribute to food banks in their community. Encourage students to go home that night and discuss local hunger and food banks with their parents, this will ignite a family discussion on the topic.

Local Hunger: Hunger in My Community Activity

Concluding Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to use the knowledge they have gained during the course of the lesson to create a hunger awareness poster that will be hung in the school to inform their peers.
- **Instructional method(s):** 40-45 minutes
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will formulate a written reflection instead of creating a visual poster.
- **Estimated time:** the remainder of class time, leading into a take home project.
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students to reflect on everything they have learned about hunger in their community. Write suggestions on the board.
 2. Following this brainstorm, run a Think-Pair-Share session with the class:
 - Think: ask students to think to themselves about what they would like to tell other students in the school about hunger in their community. While doing so, ask them to also think about how they would transfer this message into a visual poster.
 - Pair: ask students to join into pairs. They must begin by sharing the message they want to tell about local hunger, then they must describe how they will represent this message in their visual poster. The pairs will discuss their ideas offering suggestions and tips to each other.
 - Share: bring the class back together and ask pairs to share what they discussed with the entire class.
 3. After the Think-Pair-Share is complete, allow students to use the rest of the class period to complete their posters.
 4. When the posters are complete, display them around the school to inform the student body about local hunger issues.

Local Hunger: Creative Story Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to encourage students to use their creativity to fight local hunger.
- **Instructional method(s):** 30-35 minutes
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will be divided into groups and create skit about how they will use their super powers to conquer local hunger.
- **Estimated time:** the remainder of class time, leading into a take home project.
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask the class to list their favorite superheroes. Write answers on the board.
 2. Go through the list of superheroes and brainstorm all of the powers and talents each character has (e.g.: superman can fly, etc).
 3. Following this brainstorm, ask students to use their imaginations and discuss how each of these powers and talents can be used to fight local hunger. Record suggestions on the board beside the character names.
 4. Explain to students that they must become their superhero and write a creative story explaining how they are going to fight local hunger based on the different powers and talents they have as their character.
 5. When students have completed their creative stories, ask them to hand them in to receive a grade.

Local Hunger: Halloween for Hunger Campaign

Extension Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to introduce students to a tangible outlet for action by informing them on Free The Children's annual Halloween for Hunger campaign.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will be given the Halloween for Hunger How-To Guide and discuss campaign ideas in groups.
- **Estimated time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. On Halloween night, youth around the world will take action to fight local hunger and poverty by participating in Free The Children's annual Halloween for Hunger campaign. On October 31st, campaign participants will go trick-or-treating for non-perishable food items, donating the food they collect to local food banks. This action will allow them to support their community food banks, while raising awareness about the challenges faced by millions of families in North America and around the world.
 2. Ask students to reflect on what they have learned throughout the lesson. Explain to them that it is easy to feel helpless when learning about issues such as hunger because it is difficult to determine how you can help. Inform students that they are going to be introduced to a call to action, a tangible way that they can stand fight hunger in their community and that is through Free The Children's annual Halloween for Hunger campaign.
 3. Introduce the campaign by viewing the following videos:
 - An introduction to Halloween for Hunger by Craig Kielburger
<http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/campaigns.php?type=halloweenforhunger>
 - A step by step guide on how to run the campaign
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWdYb8CGnZM>
 4. Keeping in mind all that they have learned throughout the course of the lesson, ask students the following questions:
 - Why is this campaign important?
 - What are the goals of this campaign?
 - What are the steps you can take to participate in this campaign?
 - Why is Halloween a good time to hold such a campaign?
 - How can we get more people involved in this campaign?
 - How can we receive the best results on Halloween night, when collecting non-perishable food items?
 - What else can we do around our school to raise awareness?
 - What can we do around our community to raise awareness?
 5. Refer to the Halloween for Hunger How-to Guide and discuss the steps participants will take leading up to and on Halloween night. Address any outstanding questions that students may have.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

- Free The Children's Halloween for Hunger webpage – www.freethechildren.com/halloweenforhunger: Here you will find the Halloween for Hunger How-to Guide, as well as more information and resources about the campaign
- The Salvation Army Canada - <http://www.salvationarmy.ca/>
- Ontario Association of Food Banks - www.oafb.ca
- Food Banks Canada - www.foodbankscanada.ca
- Feeding America - www.feedingamerica.org
- Meal Exchange - www.mealexchange.org
- Food Research and Action Center - www.frac.org
- S.A.H. - www.studentsagainsthunger.org
- The Hunger Site - www.thehungersite.com
- World Hunger Year - www.whyhunger.org

Appendix 1

Use the below assessment rubric to evaluate students' comprehension of issues and participation in the lesson plan activities. This rubric can be used in the following activities: Needs versus Wants, Hunger Webs, The Food I Eat, Hunger in my Community: Poster, and Creative Story about Hunger.

Assessment Rubric for Student Work

| Performance Factors | Outstanding | Very Effective | Effective | Marginally Effective | Ineffective |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Producing Quality Work | Produces high quality work. | Produces quality work. | Produces good quality work. | Produces work with limited quality. | Produces work with no quality. |
| Using Work Time Effectively | Always remains on task, showing exemplary adherence to boundaries and rules. | Consistently remains on task, showing respect to boundaries and rules. | Sometimes on task, showing inconsistent observance of boundaries and rules. | Sometimes on task, showing limited observance of boundaries and rules. | Not on task, showing no observance of boundaries and rules. |
| Knowledge Of Topic | Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of concepts. | Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of concepts. | Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of concepts. | Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of concepts. | Demonstrates no knowledge and understanding of concepts. |
| Communicating Effectively | Expresses and organizes ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness. | Expresses and organizes ideas and information with considerable effectiveness. | Expresses and organizes ideas and information with some effectiveness. | Expresses and organizes ideas and information with limited effectiveness. | Expresses and organizes ideas and information with no effectiveness. |
| Originality | Presents or selects a fresh and original idea. | Presents or selects a somewhat original idea. | Presents a somewhat predictable response to the topic. | Presents a predictable response to the topic. | Restates topic using no original ideas. |