

LOCAL HUNGER

SECONDARY LEVEL

Lesson Plan: Local hunger in the secondary 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:** secondary
- **Themes:** poverty, hunger, needs, wants, campaigning, awareness, community.
- **Estimated time:** approximately 75 minutes for one orientation activity, one core activity, and one concluding activity.
- **Learning goals**
 - Students will:
 - Perform independent research.
 - Participate in active group work and class discussions.
 - Determine how to visually display research findings
 - Determine the difference between a “need” and a “want.”
 - Learn about hunger in their community, as well as its causes and effects.
 - Overcome hunger myths.
 - Create a research poster to inform fellow students about a hunger issue.
 - Explore the purpose and use of a food bank.
 - Learn what they can do to fight local hunger.
- **Resources required**
 - Chart paper



- Markers
 - Computers and internet
 - Grocery store fliers
- **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.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will discuss proposed questions in groups rather than having a full class discussion.
- **Estimated time:** 20 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.
 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.
 5. Lead a discussion around food and hunger, using these suggested questions:
 - What category does food belong to? Why?
 - Is food necessary for human survival?
 - Do all people have the right to food? Why?
 6. Ensure that students are aware that food is a basic human need and that it is necessary for survival.
 7. Move onto a discussion about hunger using the following suggested questions:
 - 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.: absence from work/school, less energy to study, etc.)
 - What are some of the reasons why a person in your community would go hungry?
 - What are some of the things we do in our community to help people that are experiencing hunger?
 - Thinking of things we already do in our community, where do you still see areas of need? What more can we do?
 8. Before concluding this discussion, ensure that students have a thorough understanding of the causes and effects of hunger.

Local Hunger: Grocery Budget 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 will create a grocery list for themselves over the course of a week instead of a family of four.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Collect fliers from you local grocery store.
 2. Divide students into groups of four and distribute chart paper and grocery store fliers to each group.
 3. Explain to students that each group will become a family unit of four. As a group, they must determine the nutritional needs of their family based on the age and size of each member (e.g.: adults eat more than children do, etc.).
 4. 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 their family of four for one week. On their chart paper, ask them to record the type of food, as well as the quantity and price . When this is complete, ask the students to calculate the total cost of their groceries.

Teacher Note: It is important to make sure students have estimated within a reasonable price range. By North American standards, the average family of four spends \$500 on groceries per month; therefore, this is about \$100-\$150 per week. If there is a large discrepancy between students' answers and these statistics, ask them to review their work and determine where they can make changes.

5. Ask each group to present their grocery list to the class and lead a discussion around this activity by asking the following suggested questions:
 - Were you surprised by the total price of your weekly groceries?
 - 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?
 - How does a family afford their food?
6. 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? (i.e.: 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.

7. 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: Hunger In Your Community Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to research hunger issues in their community. With this knowledge, students will create a visual display that will be hung in the school to inform their peers.
- **Instructional method(s):** independent project.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students will write a research paper rather than creating a visual poster.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes of class time leading into an independent continuous project
- **Steps:**
 1. Explain to students they will be participating in an independent research project about hunger in their community.
 2. Allow students to choose one of the following topics and associated questions:
 - Topic 1: Assessing hunger
 - What are the causes of hunger?
 - Who is vulnerable to hunger?
 - What are the health effects of going hungry?
 - What are the effects of hunger on the ability of children to learn?
 - What is a well-balanced diet? And why is it important to eat a well-balanced diet?
 - What are the connections between poverty and hunger? Wages and hunger?
 - What social welfare programs exist to alleviate hunger and how effective/ineffective are they?
 - Topic 2: Assessing need in my school district
 - How many schools are in your district?
 - What services do the schools in your district offer for hunger related problems? Describe these services, explaining why they exist, what resources are necessary to keep them running, and what the benefits of them are.
 - Topic 3: Assessing need in my community
 - Where does hunger and poverty exist in your community?
 - What factors contribute to the increase of hunger and poverty in your community? (e.g.: wealth gaps, job availability, access to child care, access to affordable living, etc.)
 - What policies exist in your community that allow for and perpetuate hunger? (e.g.: welfare policies, healthcare, wages, etc.)
 - Is there a proactive approach your community can take to eliminate hunger?
 - List some reactive hunger responses your community is taking in order to fight hunger (e.g.: food banks, soup kitchens, etc.)
 3. Independently, students must begin by researching their topic, using the associated questions to guide their research.
 4. Once they have completed their research, students must transform their information into a visual awareness poster that will be used to inform the student body about hunger issues. Allow students the remainder of the class period to begin their research, asking them to take the remainder of their work home to complete on their own time.
 5. Once the posters are complete, display the finished products around the school to raise awareness to local hunger issues and inspire the rest of the student body to participate in Halloween for Hunger.

Local Hunger: Hunger Myths Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to understand the many reasons why people suffer from hunger.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Students work independently instead of in a group.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students to list some of the reasons why people go hungry in Canada. Record answers on the board.

Teacher note: As you lead this discussion, keep in mind that some of the reasons why hunger exists 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.

2. Tell students that there are a great number of myths about hunger that must be broken. Explain that as a class, you are going to work together to break some of these myths.
3. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the following myths:
 - Hunger is visible; if people are suffering from hunger in my community, I am able to see it.
 - If someone in my community is suffering from hunger, it is their own fault.
 - Only adults use food banks.
 - I don't have to donate to my local food bank because other people in my community will.
 - Contributing to local food banks is the only way we can fight against hunger in our community.
 - Problems associated with hunger are confined to small pockets of society, certain areas of the country or certain neighbourhoods. My community and neighbourhood are not affected.
 - People go hungry because they are lazy and don't work hard.
4. Encourage students to discuss these myths as a group, in order to brainstorm facts and statements that break their assigned myths. Further to that, ask the groups to use resources found around the classroom such as computers, books, newspapers etc. to research more substantial facts, publications and statistics that will help break their myth.

Teacher note: please see the list of additional resources below, as a starting point for websites to research this information.

5. When students have completed their research and compiled their evidence, have each group present their myth and findings to the class.
6. Promote an active class discussion around each myth, addressing why they think people believe these untrue myths and how they can be dispelled.

Local Hunger: Hunger Banquet Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to provide students with a unique and memorable experience that will allow them to learn about the impact and prevalence of hunger in their community.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Empower the students by encouraging them to host a hunger banquet for the school.
- **Estimated time:** 1 hour
- **Steps:**
 1. Choose a lunch hour to host the hunger banquet.
 2. Either ask students to bring their own lunch, or arrange with the cafeteria staff to have lunch provided.
 3. The most important part of the banquet is the way the guests are arranged and what they are required to do throughout the course of the banquet. This will be done based on local food bank statistics. The class will be divided in half, one half will represent those in Canada who do not rely on a food bank, while the other half will represent those that do. Within the second group, they will be divided up to reveal the different types of people that access a food bank, based on statistics from Food Bank Canada. This will provide the students with greater insight into food bank use and the prevalence of hunger in their community.
 4. Arrange the guests as follows:
 - Divide the class in half.
 - One half will represent the population in Canada that does not rely on a food bank (do not reveal this until the end of the banquet). This group will be given no restrictions throughout the banquet and they will be treated with extra care.
 - The other half will represent the group of Canadian that relies on food banks (do not reveal this until the end of the banquet). Within this group, divide them as follows:
 - 11.4% cannot use their hands (after the meal, reveal that this group is percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that is working poor).
 - 38% can't speak (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are children and youth).
 - 15% must wear a blindfold over their eyes (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that have disabilities).
 - 7.2% can only eat their food using a spoon (after the meal, reveal that this group is percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are senior citizens).
 - The remaining guests can only eat with their left hand (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are single persons).
 5. Allow the banquet to begin! Monitor the guests while they eat to ensure they are abiding by their restrictions.
 6. When students have finished eating, ask the different groups how they felt during the course of their meal. Ensure that you get a reaction from each group.
 7. After this reflection, reveal to the group what the different restrictions symbolized. Encourage student reactions by asking the following questions:



- Before this banquet, what types of people did you think accessed a food bank?
 - Were you surprised by any of the Food Bank Canada statistics? What surprised you?
8. Explain that in March 2010, 867,948 people in Canada accessed a Food Bank. This is the highest amount of people on record, indicating the need is increasing.
 9. 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
 10. 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.

These statistics were taken from Food Banks Canada, Hunger Count 2010
<http://www.cafb-acba.ca/main2.cfm?id=10718648-B6A7-8AA0-6A3C6F3CAC0124E1>

Local Hunger: Halloween for Hunger Campaign

Extension Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to familiarize themselves with the Halloween for Hunger campaign and how it relates to everything they have learned during the course of the lesson. This discussion is also meant to give students the opportunity to come up with additional ideas and strategies for their 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. 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 a tangible way that they can fight hunger in their community and that is through Free The Children's annual Halloween for Hunger campaign.
 2. 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>
 3. 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?
 4. 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: Grocery Budget, Investigating Hunger in your Community: Research Poster and Hunger myths.

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.