BRINGING INEQUALITY INTO THE CLASSROOM

Using Food to Teach Social Stratification and Citizenship

Wynne Wright, Ph.D.
1. Why the study of inequality belongs in the high school classroom?

2. Agriculture and food (agrifood) as avenues toward understanding contemporary issues of inequality.

Inequality & Stratification

Who gets what and how ...

Inequality: The existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society.

Stratification: A system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.

- the complex of social institutions that generate inequalities.
- the institutional processes that define certain goods as valuable
- the rules of allocation that distribute these goods across various occupations or positions in the division of labor (e.g., doctor, farmer, “housewife”)  

(Grusky, 1994:3)
Inequality and Personal Development

Rationale

1. Awareness of structural inequality
   - objects of stratification by schools
   - stratification agents
     - "jocks," "nerds," "goth"

2. Discovering social class and its consequences
   - can become disenfranchised or empowered.
Inequality and Citizenship

Rationale

1. Questions about social stratification and inequality are fundamental to understand society.

A. Understand our rapidly changing & globalizing world

B. To engage with key issues in American policy-making (e.g., educational policy; programs to alleviate poverty & hunger; housing; measures to ensure environmental justice, etc.)
Wealth Inequality in America

Source: Norton and Ariely, 2011
Inequality and Leadership

Rationale

Understand – and correct - the central institutions & mechanisms that create, reproduce, & alter the structure of inequalities

Ex: education, labor markets, families, neighborhoods, the media, religion, governments, criminal justice system, & the food system.
Setting the Context

Resistance, Denial & Anger
- Challenge to worldview & sense of self

Responses:
- Delineate everyday from academic
  - See, sociological concepts handout
- Focus on subjects of shared familiarity
- Use humor and satire

Resource:
Everybody's Talking

What to EAT

Marion Nestle

The Omnivore's Dilemma
Michael Pollan

Slow Food Nation
Carlo Petrini

Stuffed and Starved
Raj Patel

Fast Food Nation
Eric Schlosser

The End of Food
Paul Roberts

Change Comes to Dinner
Julian Cribb

In Defense of Food
Michael Pollan

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle
Barbara Kingsolver

The Coming Famine
Katherine Gustafson
What can the food system teach us about inequality?

1. Who eats?
2. What’s on our dinner plate?
3. How we eat?
4. What’s the relationship between diet, agriculture & health?
5. How is food policy constructed?
6. What’s the role of the government in shaping ‘fat’ citizens?
7. How is agriculture and food related to climate change?
8. Is a move toward becoming more ‘sustainable’ linked to social inequality?
9. How are lines drawn to reshape the contemporary food system?
Food System

Food Production

Distribution & Aggregation

Food Processing

Markets & Purchasing

Marketing

Preparation & Consumption

Resource & Waste Recovery

Food System Elements

Adapted by Christy Shi, Center for Environmental Farming Systems.
From: Wilkins, J. and Eames-Sheavly, M. Discovering the Food System; An experiential learning program for young and inquiring minds. Cornell University, Departments of Nutritional Science and Horticulture. http://www.discoverfoodsys.cornell.edu/
Discussion

PBS: People Like Us: Social Class

CONCEPTS:
Social Class
Stratification
Class Consciousness

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_RtI3Y4Eul&list=PLC6D871A2A8C3C8EF&index=2
Food and Consumption

• Relationship between social class and food is complex
  – **Economic:** some groups occupy different market locations in terms of ability to purchase certain foods
  – **Social:** different groups ‘use’ food to ‘mark’
• Menus: Design, Content, Language, Images & Price reveal class distinctions

CONCEPTS:
- Social Class
- Cultural Capital
- Food Insecurity
CHEZ PANISSE

Green bean and tomato salad with onion flatbread

Fried local petrale sole with green coriander

Spit-roasted Soul Food Farm chicken Moroccan-style with lemon and olives

Middleton Gardens raspberry sherbet coupe with nectarines and summer berries

Wednesday, July 2, 2008
### Menu Coding Worksheet

#### Coding Criteria:

- Economic Accessibility
- Specialized Knowledge
- Common food names vs exotic
- Photography vs. art

### Food and Social Class Content Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Upper</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Menu 1</td>
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<td>Menu 2</td>
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<td>Menu 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menu 4</td>
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'The Flavor of Pittsburgh' food tour launches

July 9, 2014 8:03 PM

By Lorri Drumm / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Elliott Mower of Point Breeze Neighborhood District as the Flavor of Pittsburgh Food Tour participants arrive on June 27, 2014.

If someone were to ask you if you would like to go on a preview of a new food tour in Pittsburgh, how would you respond? Is it a trick question?

Recently, invited guests from the local travel and tourism industry, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and some fortunate others (including me) got the opportunity to take a sneak peak tour of 'The Flavor of Pittsburgh' food tour hosted by Chatham University and the University of Pittsburgh.

The 'Flavor of Pittsburgh' food tour uses a zipline and a river cable car to transport guests on a tour of some of the city's most treasured landmarks and scenic vistas. The tour includes stops at several of the city's most famous food stops where guests sample local cuisine.

The tour begins with a zipline ride over the Allegheny River to the Point where guests are greeted by a local chef and greeted with a glass of bubbly. The tour then heads down to the Strip District where guests are taken to several of the area's most popular food stops.

The tour concludes with a boat ride down the Monongahela River where guests are treated to a harvest tasting dinner at Chatham University's Eden Hall campus.

For more information on the 'Flavor of Pittsburgh' food tour, visit www.Chatham.edu/foodtour.
"You may not feel any healthier right away, but you’ll definitely feel more smug."
• Are heritage foods for all of ‘us’?
• Who decides what are ‘valuable’ foods worthy to be preserved/celebrated?
• Who gets to eat good, local, healthy food?
• Is the locavore movement inclusive?
  – Who is at the Saturday farmers’ market? (race, class and gender)
• What are the barriers for eating good, healthy food for minority groups?
• What are the most important values embedded in the concept of “local food” and how can these be measured?

Concepts: Power, Income, Race
POOR HEALTH

U.S. lags other countries in addressing poverty-related health issues

September 5, 2014 12:00 AM
By Lillian Thomas / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The U.S. continues to trail other nations in recognizing the role of poverty in quality of health.

In Canada, where indigenous people in Manitoba between the ages of 10 and 25 are eight times more likely to commit suicide than non-indigenous people, a program aims to restore health as “life in balance.” It focuses on strengthening the identity, culture and language of the youths to counteract depression and other psychological disorders.

Related Media:
- Poor Health: How to fix the problems

LATEST IN HEALTH
- Judge blames EP for oil well blast
  about 12 hours ago
- Poor Health: How to fix the problems
  about 19 hours ago
What can I do with the Atlas?

- Create maps showing the variation in a single indicator across the U.S.
  - Example, variation in the prevalence of obesity or access to grocery stores across PA counties
- View all of the county-level indicators for a selected county;
- Zoom in to specific areas and export or print maps;
- Download the full dataset in Excel format.
Category: State Food Insecurity
Current Map: Household food insecurity (%, three-year average), 2010-12*

Geographic Level: County-level unless otherwise noted, * = State, ** = Region

Click map for county info

Crawford, PA
County FIPS Code: 42039
Current Value: 12.30 Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Household food insecurity (%, three-year average), 2010-12*</td>
<td>12.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household very low food security (%, three-year average), 2000-02*</td>
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<td>USDA, ERS: Food Environment Atlas Data</td>
<td>Allegheny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population w/ low access</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Seniors w/ low access</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Children w/ low access</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Low income w/ low access</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>Household Food Insecurity (3 yr avg)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
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<td>Adult Diabetes Rate</td>
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<td>Adult Obesity Rate</td>
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<td>Farmers’ markets</td>
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<td>- markets that take SNAP</td>
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<td>CSA’s</td>
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**Warning!!!**

Be sure to check years - Some data not consistently available for each year
Hunger profile:

ALLEGHENY COUNTY
Population: 1,227,066

FOOD INSECURITY
What percentage of county residents are food insecure?
14% | Food insecurity rate

HOW NUTRITION PROGRAMS HELP
A safety net of programs helps low-income families in Pennsylvania put food on the table every day.
SNAP | 161,358
USDA estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts.

More than half of those people are low-income.
Food and Citizenship

GROW PITTSBURGH

Healthy Adams County

Braddock Farms

FARMERS’ MARKET

PITTSBURGH FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

food banks

PENN STATE College Of Agricultural Sciences COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Teaching Food Systems Inequality

Resources

- USDA, ERS
- Food Environment Atlas
- Context’s ‘Food’ issue, Summer 2014

- PASA (PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture); Dir. Brian Snyder, (see quarterly newsletter)
- PCO (PA Certified Organic)
- PA Farm Bureau
- Pennsylvania Fruit and Vegetable Growers
- PSU Extension
  - In Allegheny Co., Heather Mikulas, food policy, urban ag,
- Food Policy Councils
- Food Banks, Pantries
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