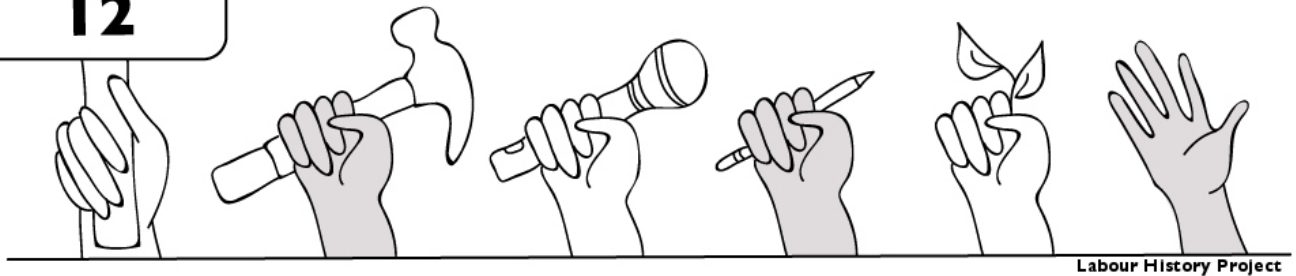




Lesson 5: Factory Simulation



Labour History Project

Lesson Summary: Factory Simulation. Interactive simulation/role play where students experience unfair work practices and consider solutions.

Time: One period

Essential Question: What are the sources of power? How and why is it used?

Lesson Activities

Tell students that they are going to simulate a factory/worksite before unionization. The teacher will play a few different roles in the simulation. First, the teacher plays the role as the owner of the factory (Mrs. Cookie) and hands out pay rates to the students. The students have all been working in the factory for 10 years doing the same job (cookie assembly). As the teacher hands out the pay rates the students see and hear that a few students are getting higher wages than most. Five students should get \$5.00 a day, 7 students \$3.00 a day and 18 students \$2.00 a day. Have the students tape their wage scale to their desk or chest for all to see.

The teacher now announces that he is no longer the owner but the chosen factory worker to be the facilitator of a meeting of all the workers because some workers have been complaining that the pay scale is not fair. The class forms a large circle to discuss the complaints. Secretly before class 3 of the five students with the top wage scale of \$5.00 a day have been briefed by the teacher to play the devil's advocate in the meeting. Those 3 students will argue for the status-quo.

Give those three students a few suggestions secretly before class, for example:

- It is his factory and he has the right to do what he wants with it and pay what he wants to his employees.
- If you don't like your wage you can go find another job it is a free country.
- If we ask for higher wages, the factory might close, and we all could be out of work.
- He can't afford to pay more.
- There might be other problems that we don't know about so he can't pay higher wages.
- Already 1/3 of us make more than \$2.00 a day.
- If you work harder, you will get more money like us.
- Mr. Cookie rewards us because we are better workers.

The teacher facilitates the meeting, calling on students for suggestions. The teachers could call upon students to make motions, have the motion seconded, debated, the question called and voted on using “Roberts Rules of Order”. These motions are the collective decisions of the workers thus the collective bargaining demands to be presented to Mr. Cookie.

After the class has expressed their views on the fairness or unfairness of the wage scale and a collective majority decision has been achieved, the teacher debriefs the simulation.

1. The role the secret students have been playing in the simulation is revealed to the class.
2. The debriefing should include a discussion on equal pay for equal work.
3. The importance of collective bargaining, establishing a fair wage for all.
4. The evaluation of the meeting of the “factory workers” What points were valid, logical and based on or not based on social justice.

Learning Objectives

1. Consider the reasons people organize
2. Experience tactics used by power to divide others
3. Participate in a collective action

Social Justice 12 Prescribed Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate attributes and behaviors that promote social justice, including recognizing injustice, fair mindedness, and willingness to participate and take action
2. Assess power dynamics and privilege in contemporary and history society including a focus on who has the power

Materials and Resources Needed

- 1 pay scale slip for each student

Backgrounders and Other Materials

- None