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Chapter (Lesson) 7. Advocacy & Food Justice

Lesson 7 Intentions:

- Students reflect on what advocacy means
- Students explore the concept of food justice and the necessity of healthy soil
- Students consider soil also as a metaphor for community
- Students examine “generative” and “regenerative” practices, in farming/agriculture, and in storytelling

Lesson 7 Overview:

What is advocacy, and how can we understand the different ways we act as advocates in our own lives? What kinds of advocacy takes place in food justice movements? How can solutions newly develop as communities use what they find in their own “backyards,” and share their knowledge? What conditions have depleted Earth’s soil and people’s relationship to it; with what impact? What are innovations in urban farming, soil health and regenerative agriculture able to teach us about seeking and cultivating diversity and a richer story?

Hidden within soil are whole worlds of both life and potential. How do we relate to the balance needed needed to repair and regenerate communities across the world?

Key Themes:

- Reflection, observation and dialogue
- Youth-led innovation and community-inspired/community-based initiatives
- The qualities and conditions of “just recovery” and “just storytelling”
- Understanding diverse needs and priorities in community; and the foundation/cultivation of “community”
- Considering whose voices, experiences and perspectives are not yet being heard or invited

Duration: This lesson is designed for 30 mins., but can be done in 15-20, or expanded to 45-80 mins.

Lesson Components:

- Slides (in Google slides format; adaptable for educator needs/preferences)
- VIDEO: “Inventing Tomorrow”; “Greenswell”; “Divest”; “The Compost Story”; “Food for the Rest of Us”; “Soil Solutions”; “Environmentalism in my Garden”; “Invasive Carp of Kentucky”
- WRITING/REFLECTION: In the News; sharing inspirations/knowledge (how-to)
- Resources and extension ideas (see end of lesson)

Materials:

- Educators: Lesson PDF, access to online media (for video viewing), slide deck (customizable)
- Students: pencil/pen and paper

Connections (see extensions/resources and standards below; full standards for this project [here](#)):

Justice, Environment; Film, Reading/Writing; History; STEM

Mini-challenge (can be used as a way of assignment/assessment); Further Reading; Watching; Exercises

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Advocacy (Discussion)

You might consider doing this discussion in small groups to begin before having each group summarize their discussion to the full group.

Slide 3

What is “advocacy”?

([Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#): the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal; the act or process of advocating for something)

- What inspires advocacy? Why is someone inspired/moved to take action in support of something? And what might they hope to accomplish?
- What are some historical examples of “advocacy”? How do you know someone is acting as an “advocate”?
- What are examples of “effective” advocacy? “Ineffective advocacy”?
 - How do you know?
 - Does all advocacy have the same goal?
 - What contributes to/supports an advocate in accomplishing a goal?
 - Do you see yourself as an advocate?
 - How so? Why not?
 - What about in your daily life?
 - Do you advocate in any way for your needs/ideas/concerns/beliefs?
 - With your family, friends, school, communities?
 - What seems easy/not so easy about the process and action of advocacy?
- What’s a local issue you’ve been thinking about?
 - How do you find out about issues impacting your local community?
 - What are the boundaries of your “local community” as you see them?

How is advocacy done?

- Speaking? Letters? Media? Organized marches/protests/gatherings? Art? Music?
- What’s the role of research/developing your understanding of an issue or cause?
- If you understand your own position, what else do you need to understand?
 - Watch this short video by Stories Challenge participant Jamie Tarrow from last year engage in research through interviews: [Greenswell](#)
- What if you meet disagreement?
 - For example, young students who are part of the Earth Guardians, a youth leadership training organization for environmental, climate, and social justice movements, made a video last year called [Divest](#), which encourages organizations to remove their investments from companies that harm the environment.
- What if none of the previously proposed solutions have ever worked?

What does story/narrative have to do with it?

- How could narrative/story influence the effectiveness of advocacy in new ways?
- How does an experience, place, or issue become real for people; even if they’ve never experienced dire circumstances?

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Food Justice Advocacy

Slides 4 & 5

By now, you're aware that there are many different ways to be an advocate for your community. Now, we are going to explore the world of food justice advocacy. Watch [this video](#) to learn more about what food justice means, then discuss the following questions:

- What is meant by having “access” to food? Who may or may not have access to nutritious and/or healthy food, and why?
- Watch (all or some of) the following 3 videos, “[The Compost Story](#)” by Kiss the Ground, “[Food for the Rest of Us](#),” and [Soil Solutions](#).
 - How are food justice, climate change, and food waste intertwined?

These short videos were about food justice, composting, and the impact of soil health/richness (the ground beneath us, the foundation of gardens, food, growing) Do we ever think about the soil? Why does it matter?

You might consider questions like:

- Did it surprise you to hear that “there are more organisms in one handful of soil than there are humans on earth”?
- Where do you find soil around you? Where is the nearest garden?
- Have you had an experience of planting a garden? Walking/putting your hands in soil?

Slide 6

- Here's a short video, “[Environmentalism in my Garden](#),” by Phoebe Wang, an RC Stories participant last year.
 - What does Phoebe Wang mean by “work[ing] with nature instead of against it”?
 - Why is soil health/restoration a climate solution?
 - How is soil health a community-based climate solution?
 - What does soil have to do with carbon in the atmosphere?
- Why is soil health/restoration a climate solution?
 - How is soil health a community-based climate solution?
 - What does soil have to do with carbon in the atmosphere?
- How might we think about soil in the context of “environmental justice,” or “just recovery”?
- What about soil as a metaphor?
 - For a foundation, or necessary conditions for health?
 - For community?
 - For...?
- What can you do to promote composting in your own home? What about in your community?

You might also explore the Redford Center supported feature film [Kiss the Ground](#) ([trailer](#))

* *Kiss the Ground* has extensive resources on soil and climate (see [HERE](#))

Adaptation: Invasive Carp of Kentucky (video) Slide 7

Food justice movements aren't only focused on soil, however. [Adaptation: Invasive Carp of Kentucky](#), follows Chinese-American entrepreneur Angie Yu who has proposed a new way to create more jobs, more food, and help restore native fish populations in the Mississippi and Ohio rivers by fishing invasive carp, a type of fish that isn't eaten much in the United States. Watch this short film and consider the following questions:

- Reflections? What stood out to you most in watching this clip?

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- What is Angie Yu working on?
 - What inspired her project? What is her connection to her innovation (consider cultural connections, cultural challenges, etc)?
- Which images stayed with you after watching?



★Lesson Seven Challenge Prep: Sound Exercise

Slide 8

Introduction:

It's tempting to think of a video/film as a visual experience, but in many/most cases, even more important than the visuals is the quality of sound. You want each word spoken (if there are words) to be clear and easily audible. The sound effects and music added can also help communicate information about the environment you are showing or how you want the audience to feel.

Questions to Consider when planning the sound of a film:

- How can your message be heard in the best way?
- Where should there be sound, and where should there be quiet?
- Do you want to include natural sounds? The sounds of nature, water, birds, a city?
- If you imagine your audience includes people who don't speak the same language as you, what might be the role of sound in communicating your message?
- If there is music, is it making you feel the way you want the audience to feel or is it distracting?
- If you mix music and voice, how can they support each other, instead of one overriding the other?

Assignment:

If you participated in Lesson 5 you will use the interview footage for this exercise. If you did not complete the exercise in Lesson 5, write a poem about what you hear and what you feel when in your favorite spot in nature and record yourself reading it. Bring the footage into an editing software and add pictures to support your interviewee's nature story. Then, add 3 different sound scapes and observe the differences. Add one track with nature sounds. Add a song that is somber or serious. Try a song that is happy or inspirational. Which one feels the best? Why? Also note, the absence of music/sound effects can be the most powerful choice.

We'd love to see your videos! Feel free to send anything you'd like to stories@redfordcenter.org.

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Suggested Standards: Language Arts and History/Social Studies

This lesson gives students multiple opportunities to engage with **language, images and text**, with particular focus on how point of view impacts the story one tells. Students also have a chance to reflect on their own experience and point of view in **conversation and writing**.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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Suggested Standards: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Throughout this lesson students are encouraged to understand the primacy of **observation**, and the need to attend closely to **patterns and relationships**, and to be able to envision **the impact of actions**.

- Patterns and relationships
- Precision and depth in observation
- Inference and probability
- Ratios and proportional relationships

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Suggested Connections: NGSS/Environment

Students are encouraged to make connections between the health of natural systems and the health of human beings and human communities. In addition, phenomena and change may be observable at one scale and not another, or may require a different way of inquiry and attention to detect and understand.

- Health of human lives and health of natural systems
- Flow of energy and matter at the scale of the entire planet
- Exchange of matter between natural systems and human societies affects long-term functioning of both
- Phenomena that can be observed at one scale may not be noticed/observable at another scale
- Systems interact with other systems
- Stability might be disturbed either by sudden events or gradual changes that accumulate over time

Suggested Connections: Social Justice

The integration of perspectives and voices in this lesson is intended to encourage greater appreciation for the depth of **one's own identity**, and **respectful curiosity about others' lived experience**.

Diversity. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

Action. Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to... injustice.

Suggested Connections: Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Components of this lesson are meant to support students' sense of **confidence and agency**, as well as their social-awareness and sense for relationships; as well as how much relationships need tending, both with **respect** to our relationship with the natural world and each other.

- Self-awareness (confidence, self-efficacy)
- Social-awareness (perspective-taking, appreciating diversity, respect for others)
- Social skills (communication, relationship building)
- Responsible decision-making (evaluating, reflecting)

Suggested Connections: UN Sustainability Goals

(*Click the images to go to pages on the UN's website that detail the goals and intentions behind each.)

