

## Sociology Lesson Plan: Social Reproduction and Linguistic Capital

**# of Days:** 2

**Context:**

- This is an elective sociology course designed for grades 11-12. This course cannot be used as a substitute for any core classes.

**Essential Topic & Questions:**

- The Sociopolitical Implications of Linguistic Cultural Capital
  - How is linguistic cultural capital connected to social reproduction?
  - What are the social and political consequences of linguistic hierarchies?

**Standards:**

- NCSS.5.Individuals, Groups, and Institutions: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- NCSS.6.Power, Authority, and Governance: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

**Prior Knowledge:**

- Earlier in the course students examined and discussed a few of the major figures of classical sociology (such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Mead) and their theories. Students have participated in a variety of discussion formats, including small group and whole class arrangements, fishbowls, and Socratic Seminars. Students have studied cultural capital previously in the unit, and they are largely comfortable with the concept of social reproduction. Students began their discussion of linguistic cultural capital during the previous class.

**Lesson Objectives:**

- SWBAT explain the sociopolitical implications of linguistic cultural capital.
- SWBAT connect the game to the sociological concepts of linguistic cultural capital and social reproduction.
- SWBAT evaluate and critique the hierarchy of languages and dialects.

**Lesson Assessment:**

- SW participate in the “Chip Game” and engage in the follow-up whole class discussion (formative assessment).

**Activities:**

- The Chip Game (Appendix A; taken from Dr. David E. Kirkland)
- Whole Class Discussion (Debriefing the game and making connections)
- Constructing a Dialect/Language Hierarchy (Teacher-Led Discussion)

**Learner Factors/Accommodating Different Learners:**

- This lesson should appeal to a variety of different learners and learning styles. Kinesthetic learners will likely appreciate the Chip Game, in which they are able to move around, interact with their peers, and socially construct new experiences and knowledge. Auditory learners should benefit from the whole class discussion, as this activity offers them the opportunity to listen to others and engage in an academic dialogue on the game's implications. Moreover, when the teacher draws the different shapes on the board and connects these to the concept of linguistic cultural capital, visual learners should be able to develop a more meaningful understanding of sociolinguistic hierarchies.

**Materials:**

- Chalkboard/whiteboard & chalk/markers
- Three paper bags
- A variety of different colored chips (at least 120)
- Overhead projector hooked to laptop
- Internet access
- Prezi: [http://prezi.com/g7roodscxddd/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy&rc=ex0share](http://prezi.com/g7roodscxddd/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share)
- Classroom computers and student-owned technologies

**Rationale:**

- All students use language in their everyday lives. They write, tell stories, read a variety of different texts, and use their dialects to communicate with the people who make up their realities. However, many students are unaware of the significant political consequences of one's language. This lesson is designed to uncover the politics inherent in language and help students to recognize the role that language plays in the process of social reproduction, a key concept within the discipline of sociology. Ideally, the "Chip Game" will promote a high level of engagement with the lesson's topic and guide students to make connections between linguistic cultural capital and social inequalities, privilege, and oppression. The whole class discussions will foster an open dialogue, allowing students to express their experiences involving the game and to critique the ways in which "non-standard" dialects are treated by social institutions and individuals.
- In summary, this lesson enables students to analyze linguistic cultural capital through a critical sociological lens. They will examine how society privileges some languages while subjugating others and discuss ways in which we can begin to appreciate a variety of languages/dialects within school and the larger society. What's more, this lesson encourages students to develop empathy for those individuals whose linguistic cultural capital has been institutionally marginalized by society.

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity	Teacher Activity
<p><b>Day One:</b> Before Class</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>The teacher sets up the classroom for the "Chip Game" and moves desks/tables around to provide enough walking and gathering space for students.</p> <p>The teacher brings in three paper bags filled with a variety of colored coins or chips, and the different colored chips will be assigned different values. For instance, each bag may be filled with the following types of chips/coins and their associated values: gold (50pts), silver (25pts), blue (15pts), red (10pts), green (5pts), white (1pt), and black (-5pts). Note: it is important that the bags are made to be unequal in their average value amounts. One bag should contain a majority of gold, silver, blue, and red coins; another should contain a majority of blue, red, green, and white coins; and the unfortunate third bag should contain a majority of white and black coins. There should be bonus points for certain chip combinations, such as the All-American combo (1 red, 1 white, 1 blue gives the player an extra 10 points) and the Three-of-a-Kind combo (three chips of the same color gives the player an extra 5 points).</p> <p>The teacher writes the following on the board: the list of chip colors and their point values, the list of special combos, and the rules for the game.</p>
<p>8:00-8:05</p>	<p>Students listen to directions and ask questions as they arise.</p>	<p>The teacher greets students and takes attendance. The teacher asks for three student volunteers, and these volunteers become the "police officers" for the duration of the game. The teacher gives each "police officer" a bag of chips and designates a "jail" for the game. Then the teacher breaks the rest of the class into three teams, asks them to name their individual teams, and writes each team's name on the board. One officer is assigned to each of the groups.</p> <p>The teacher then announces the rules for the game and draws attention to the key details on the board: "Police officers, you will give each member of your group three chips from your bag. After each member has received his or her chips, all players will have about three minutes to move around the classroom and trade their chips with others if they so choose. The goal of the game is to get the highest amount of points. However, you are not allowed to talk during this trading time, and you must find ways to communicate silently. If you do talk or attempt to cheat, the police officers will throw you into the jail [a designated area of the classroom] and take away your chips." The teacher asks if there are any questions and then tells the officers to begin handing out the chips.</p>
<p>8:05-8:45</p>	<p>Students play the game. Once they receive their chips, they may or may not attempt to trade them with others. After about three minutes, they will tally up their points and write their name and total on the board under their team's name. Those in the "winning team" get to create a new rule after each round, and those in the lowest</p>	<p>The teacher keeps track of the time and announces when students should write their names and totals on the board. Afterward, the teacher examines the team totals, which should be clearly stratified into high, average, and low achievement groups. The teacher verbally praises the high achievers in the elite team, i.e. the team with the best bag of chips. Then the teacher rewards the highest achievers of the middle and low groups by moving them to a superior team. The teacher also punishes the game's lowest achievers by moving them into a team with a lower point total. As a reward to the elite team "for playing the game so well," the teacher gives them one minute to create a new rule for the next rounds of the game. While this team is busy discussing their new rule,</p>

	achieving team get to hear a condescending speech about their poor performance. After the teacher examines the point totals, the officers collect their group's chips; they hand out new chips at the beginning of each round. The game continues for several rounds.	the teacher goes to talk to the lowest achieving group and gives them rather patronizing advice: "There's no reason why you can't succeed like the other groups. You need to work harder." The game continues for several more rounds, and the teams should reveal increasingly stratified and unfair results.
8:45-8:55	Students take their seats and record their experiences and observations in their journals.	The teacher asks students to take their seats, pull out their journals, and record their experiences and observations for tomorrow's discussion. Students may respond to the following questions: "How did the game make you feel? What patterns did you notice? What was unfair about the game?"
<b>Day Two:</b> Before Class	Not applicable.	Teacher arranges the desks in a U-shape or circle for today's discussion and sets up the Prezi presentation on the overhead. The teacher also sends out an email to the class that contains the links for tonight's homework assignment.
8:00-8:05	Students listen to directions and review their notes from the previous class.	Teacher greets students, takes attendance, and asks students to review their notes from the previous class and recall their experiences from the "Chip Game."
8:05-8:15	Students discuss their reactions to the game with one another and respond to the teacher's questions.	The teacher facilitates the discussion by asking the following questions: "How did the game make you feel? What patterns did you notice? What was unfair about the game? How does this game illustrate the process of social reproduction or other sociological concepts?"
8:15-8:30	Students discuss connections between the game and the concept of linguistic capital. Students respond to others' comments and answer the teacher's questions.	The teacher moves the Prezi presentation to the slide with the debriefing questions. Then the teacher reveals that the chips can be seen as a metaphor for different languages and dialects. The teacher explains how society and institutions (like schools) privilege certain languages and dialects over others. To help students make connections between the game and the concept of linguistic capital, the teacher asks students the following questions (on the Prezi): "Whose dialects are privileged in society? How are speakers of other, less valued dialects treated by society and institutions? In what ways does our linguistic capital influence our lives and experiences? Who decides what language or dialect is the 'proper' one?"
8:30-8:45	Students pay attention to the teacher's drawings/writings on the board. Students vote on what they believe to be the appropriate placement of the languages in the hierarchy, and they respond to the teacher's questions.	The teacher approaches the board and asks students to brainstorm some of the different dialects and languages in American society. The teacher writes down students' suggestions and adds her own to a list on the board. As she adds the dialects/languages to the list, she gives a brief explanation of each. The list may include the following dialects/languages: African-American Vernacular English, "Spanglish," American Sign Language, "Broken English"/Chinglish, Standard American English, social media dialects (lol, ttyl, brb, smh, etc.), Spanish, Chicano English, Italian, German, Native American languages, Arabic, etc. The

		<p>teacher then draws a triangle on the board, titles the triangle "SOCIETY," and divides the triangle into three sections, thus forming a hierarchy. The teacher asks students to help her fill in the triangle: "There are three layers to this triangle known as society, and so let's think of the top section as the most valued dialects and the bottom section as the least valued dialects. If we think about what our society approves and disapproves of, where should each dialect go? Let's start with African-American Vernacular English. Where should that one go?" The teacher listens to the students' responses and asks students to vote on the appropriate placement of each dialect. Once the triangle is more or less filled out, the teacher then draws a circle and writes the names/initials of the different dialects and languages within it: "We're in a hierarchical society right now, much like the triangle and the Chips Game. But I envision a world like this circle, one where we value all dialects. So, I'll ask you all: what could we do to change this system and value all chips and dialects equally?"</p>
8:45-8:55	<p>Students listen to the teacher's instructions and access available technology to begin tonight's reading assignment. Students ask questions as they arise.</p>	<p>Teacher explains tonight's homework assignments: "For homework you will read two articles. The links to the articles have already been sent to your emails and are uploaded on the classroom website. Please come prepared to discuss these articles, as you will receive credit for participation. At this time, you can bring out your cell phone or laptop, or you may access one of the classroom computers as long as your intention is to start tonight's reading."</p> <p><b>Articles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.education.com/reference/article/socioeconomic-status-vocabulary-development/">http://www.education.com/reference/article/socioeconomic-status-vocabulary-development/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/22/us/language-gap-study-bolsters-a-push-for-pre-k.html?_r=0">http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/22/us/language-gap-study-bolsters-a-push-for-pre-k.html?_r=0</a></li> </ul>