



PLAN: DISPARITIES IN HEALTHCARE ACCESS



Addressing access to healthcare in rural areas

Rationale: Students will engage in a social problem-solving strategy, PLAN, in which they will think about multiple sides of a public problem, in this instance the lack of quality health care in rural area. Students will explore ways to solve this problem in their community to address social inequities. This strategy will help students develop the skills for effective citizenship, practice civic engagement skills, and how to organize social action in their communities.

The PLAN framework stands for **P**roblem Description, **L**ist of Options, **A**ction Plan, and **N**otice Successes. Through this framework, the students will be able to analyze a problem, generate their own solutions, create an implementation plan to solve the problem, and reflect on the problem-solving process. The framework can be applied to a variety of different issues such as current events and historical events.

"Citizenship to me is more than a piece of paper. Citizenship is also about character. I am an American. We're just waiting for our country to recognize it" (Jose Antonio Vargas). PLAN helps students to really take this lesson to heart and to learn from the mistakes of the past by

analyzing what worked well and what did not by fairly weighing the options and considering potentially better alternatives, rather than passively learning about what took place or simply what didn't work. It nudges students to think about what could be done differently.

Please note that the idea of PLAN is to help students learn and use a specific problem-solving strategy. If you or other teachers in your grade already are using such a strategy, perhaps as part of an SEL or character education or bully/violence prevention or related program, you may want to use that as a framework instead of PLAN, for the sake of consistency for students.

Objective: Identity, describe and analyze ways in which the design of public space reinforces sexism. Explore and evaluate alternatives to propose a redesign of a public space in your community to local officials.

Target Grade Level: 9-12

Standards:

- **6.2.12.C.6.a** Evaluate efforts of governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations to address economic imbalances and social inequalities.
- **NJSLSA.R7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- **NJSLSA.W9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SEL Focal Skill(s): Responsible Decision Making

- Develop, implement, and model effective problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions.

Materials & Resources:

- Pencils/pens
- Notebooks
- Computer with audio & projectors
- Do Now: Infographic on pp. 8.
- Background source documents
 - [Rural Health Info](#) “Healthcare Access in Rural Communities”. Rural Health Info website. August, 8, 2021.

- [How States Can Expand Health Care Access in Rural America](#) . American Progress website. Feb. 9, 2022.
- Chromebooks/laptops for students to use
- Copies of Graphic organizers
 - Problem Description [Graphic Organizer](#)
 - PLAN [Graphic Organizer](#) if time doesn't allow for the more detailed problem description
 - SMART Goal [Graphic Organizer](#)
 - Pro-Con Options [Graphic Organizer](#)

Timing: Four, forty-five minute periods

Preparation: Assign students into small groups of no more than 4-5 per group. Inform students, *“Today you will be learning about the problem of sexism in the design of public space and how this impacts women. You will work in groups to examine a variety of informational resources and simulate a problem-solving strategy to propose alternatives for more inclusive and safe public spaces to learn how leaders organize collective social action in a democratic society.”*

Have the graphic organizers and primary sources ready to hand out, if not already assigned for homework :

- Problem Description
- PLAN Graphic Organizer
- SMART Goal
- Pro-Con Option

Lesson Procedure:

Part I: Introduction & Problem Description (45 minutes)

1. **Homework:** To introduce students to the topic of healthcare access. Ask students to take notes on the important points discovered to begin building background knowledge.
 - [US Census: Health Insurance in Rural America](#) 2019.
 - [US Census Uninsured Rates in Rural and Urban America](#) Video on how to read and engage interactive data.

Have students discuss their discoveries from the homework material in small groups or pairs. Next have them engage the “Do Now” to excite their thinking on the topic of

disparities in health care access and define some vocabulary terms they will encounter in the lesson resources.

2. **Do Now:** Have students take out their notes from the homework. In addition, pass out copies of the infographic on pg. 8. In small groups, have students discuss their findings on the causes of the disparity of health care access between urban and rural communities. Explain that these sources collectively introduce them to the problem that they will investigate, that sexism is designed subconsciously into public spaces.

In addition to the work that supports building students' background knowledge have students define the following terms related to the problem of disparities in health care access.

1. disparity
 2. mostly rural
 3. mostly urban
 4. completely rural
 5. access to health care
 6. access to health care benefits
3. **Provide background information:** Group students into small groups. Assign students to read the background resources and take notes on key findings and define any additional vocabulary. Groups can debrief in small groups or you can debrief as whole class. Exposure to these sources will extend their knowledge on the topic of health care access. Students can research additional resources as an option.
 4. **Problem Description:** In their groups, students will craft a written **Problem** description in their notebooks after answering the following questions below about the problem, who is impacted, perspectives, and other factors at play to prompt their thinking. Use the problem description graphic organizer embedded above to support the students' collaborative efforts to engage these questions and range of thinking to help them define the problem. If time doesn't afford for this part of the PLAN, use the PLAN graphic organizer included above.
 - Is there a problem? How do you know?
 - What is the problem?
 - Where is the event described in the source occurring?
 - Who is affected by the problem?
 - What is the impact?
 - Who is responsible for the problem?

- What is causing those responsible to use these practices?
- What are the issues from each perspective/party involved?
- Who were the key people involved in making important decisions?
- What internal and external factors might have influenced this issue?

Then, to culminate, have each group draft a description of the problem. Feel free to select a few groups and read their descriptions aloud to check for understanding.

Example problem description students might generate:

A shortage of doctors and insured individuals in rural areas combine to create a gap in urban versus rural health care access. As a result rural residents have to drive further away for hospitals, will deny themselves care due to cost and some will suffer health conditions that were treatable. A host of other problems, like economics of the cost of medical college, poor health literacy and the social stigmas tied to specific health services also diminish access to health care services in rural america.

Part II: Listing Options & Action Planning (70 minutes)

1. Working in their groups have students **List** Options for solutions for how they might solved the problem of to improve access to health care in rural america.
 - Identify a SMART GOAL (Specific, Measurable, Action Plan, Realistic, and Timely - *link provided at the end of the lesson*) if relevant, from the perspective of different groups involved in the situation (e.g., indentured servants, landowners, slaves).
 - List as many short and long-term solutions as you can think of.
 - Pick 2-3 solutions and think about the pros and cons of these options. *See graphic organizer.*

Example options students might generate:

- Increase federal funding for professional health care personnel to attend college and have those recipients serve a minimum of 4 years in a rural medical facility

- Increase access points by partnering with international and national health care non profits to expand internet and mobile medical services in rural areas.
- Launch an awareness campaign partner with educational institutions in and near rural areas to increase rural residents knowledge on health care literacy so they can demand increased access

Options students might pick: Develop a lobbying strategy to raise awareness and increase pressure on Congressmen and Senators to increase federal funding for medical college and have th

Pros: Ample exemplars of cities making reforms that can serve as models of success, lobbying can be done from a distance using the phone, letters and social media, politicians have a vested interest to respond to public health issues

Cons: this is a short term solution, doesn't explain how to address subconscious bias in public space planning, lobbying will require a coordinated team effort and demand considerable for communications, the team doesn't know how lobbying works

2. Have students create their own **Action Plan** they might have used for addressing this problem and analyze the plan that was used in history.
 - Create action steps to outline how you would solve the problem (action steps for different groups, if relevant).
 - What obstacles might you encounter?
 - What was the plan created to solve the problem?
 - How is your plan different from the plan created?
 - How did they carry out the plan in history?
 - What obstacles did they not anticipate?

Sample Action Plan:

1. Identify a space in the town that poses barriers and safety concerns for women.
2. Interview an expert on sexism in public places and have them identify the challenges of the space for women, other abled persons, and any marginalized group.

3. Discuss a summary of the findings and explore how to present the information to the planning board.
 4. Write a brief of the problem and provide recommendations for how to make the space more inclusive and accessible to women.
4. Present **Action Plans** (additional 45 minutes/full class period): Student groups can present their action plans to an authentic or hypothetical audience, which could include a panel of school administrators, school board members, parents, student government representatives, and/or guidance counselors. This will allow students to rehearse their public communication skills with the STAT strategy of Audience-Focused Communication.

The speeches can be accompanied by slides but should take into account crafting the presentation to account for the specific audience assigned. Please reference the Audience-Focused Communication guidelines to help support students prepare for their presentations. If you would like to develop this part of the lesson consider following up this lesson with a separate lesson on Audience-Focused Communication prior to having student groups present their action plans.

Part III: Notice Successes & Reflect on the PLAN Process (20 minutes)

1. **Notice** successes! Debrief with the whole class by leading a discussion on the following questions.
 - How have plans to make public spaces more equitable worked out?
 - What is going well?
 - What may not be going well?
 - How would your plan have worked differently?
 - What can be learned from their experience that is relevant to the present?

Example: Though women's voices are now thought of to be included in the design thinking process in some countries, it is still a rare occurrence that they are even in the same room for those planning conversations. Much more organized efforts and commitments from city planners, beyond looking at the data, are needed to take in the full scope of women's needs to make the space more equitable and accessible for women.

Please note: If students noticed that the plan implemented in the past wasn't successful/effective or didn't speak to the specific stakeholders, consider having the students go back and suggest how they would revise the actions of the leaders at the time.

Formative Assessment: Have students write a reflection on one/assign one of the following questions below:

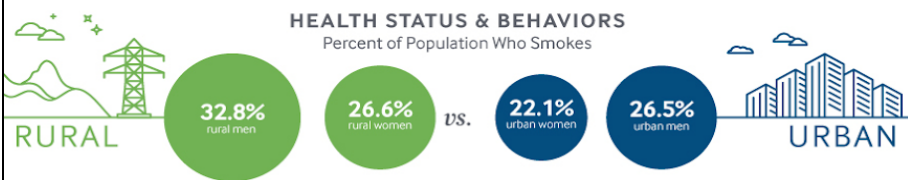
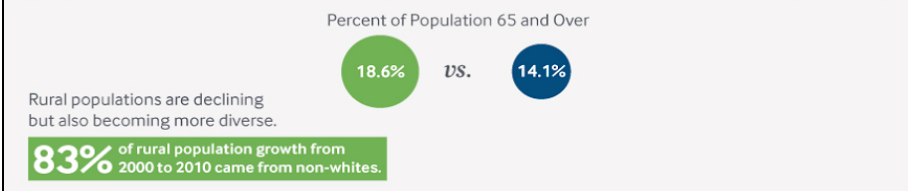
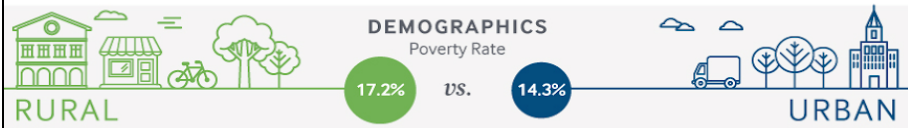
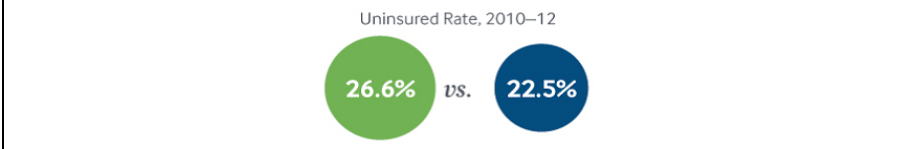
- Upon considering your group efforts through this lesson, what skills are crucial for leading social action in communities?
- How does considering the implications of sexism in public spaces assist your efforts to make a responsible decision?
- What alternative approaches could be employed by city planners to reduce conditions that make public spaces unsafe and non-functional for women? Why do you think city planners didn't choose those alternatives?
- How did considering the issue of the exploitation and mistreatment of immigrants from many sides enrich the development of your action plan?
- How did brainstorming as many solutions as possible influence your action plan, and what does this say about thinking 'outside the box'?"
- How does anticipating obstacles influence your action plan and likely outcomes?

Lesson Extension: As an option have students work in their groups to design a gender-equitable public space for their school or local town. Students can use simple materials like cardboard boxes, tape, hot glue, string, markers, and other materials that most students and or schools have available. Students can present their space and provide a research-based rationale to the presentation.

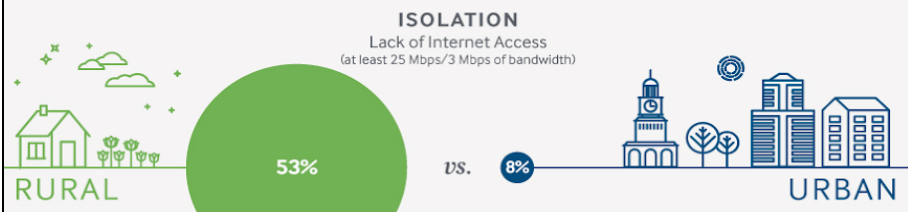
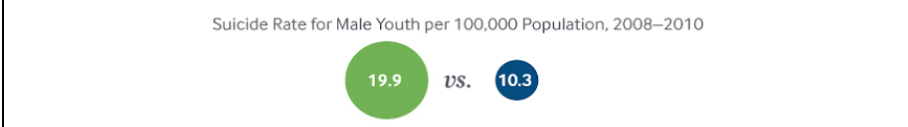
Do Now Infographic

[Common Wealth Fund](#) March 20, 2017.

A confluence of demographic, economic, social, and health system factors appear to put rural Americans at greater risk.



- 8.6%** higher prevalence of diabetes
- 38.8%** higher prevalence of coronary heart disease



40% of rural counties lack public transportation even though rural residents are more likely to be dependent on it.

[Cities Forum: Women and City - Peek into the Public Realm](#)