Chapter Activities

# Chapter 14: The Process of Change: We Can Make a Difference!

## Music as the Impetus/Reaction to Change

**Objective:** Students will see how popular culture reacts to or can be a source of social change.

**Directions:** Have each student email you the lyrics to what they feel is a song inspired by or that inspired a social movement. You may wish to assign various time periods to students, including spirituals sung during the era of slavery, protest music from the 1960s and 1970s, and hip-hop music from the 1990s and 2000s. Make a PowerPoint of what you feel are exemplary songs and bring those in, along with the music itself, if possible. Have students listen to the song, first as an aesthetic experience, then again while following along with the lyrics. Students should work as a class or in groups to analyze the messages behind the songs and the calls for action present within them.

## Core and Periphery Connections Within the Classroom

**Objective:** Students will gain an understanding of the reliance of core nations on semiperiphery and periphery nations.

**Directions:** Place columns on the chalkboard labeled “core,” “semiperiphery,” and “periphery.” Then ask students to find as many “made in” tags as possible on items within the classroom. They should check their clothing, book bags, purses or wallets, textbooks, furniture, and so on. For each tag that is located, write the item on the board under the correct column, based on where the item is made. After cataloging all the items, ask students, “If it were not for the semiperiphery and periphery nations, what would we be left with in this classroom?” Students should come to realize their reliance on other countries within the world system as they recognize that, without semiperiphery and periphery nations, many of them would be nearly nude, with only their textbooks to cover themselves.

## Social Movements in the News

**Objective:** Students will learn more about the social movements taking place currently around the world and the conditions necessary for a movement to take place.

**Directions:** Have students bring in national newspapers. In class, they should go through the papers in teams of two or three and identify those stories that detail social movements or conditions that are ripe for social movements to emerge. If the social movements are currently active, students should identify the types of movement and propose the theoretical explanation that best explains each movement, based on the information in the paper. If conditions are ripe for a social movement to emerge, students should identify the type of movement they expect to see occur and why, as well as identify which additional things must occur for a movement to formally emerge.

## Addressing Environmentalism and Social Justice

**Objective:** This activity will require students to evaluate one popular social movement in the United States, environmentalism. They will compare this to issues of social justice and sustainability.

**Directions:** Before class, have the students look up the corporate websites of a few companies they currently support (by buying from them or purchasing their goods). Have them investigate the “social responsibility” of the corporation, including their environmental efforts, their commitments to their consumers, their commitments to their workers, and their commitment to improving the social climate of the world we live in. Then, in class, have a discussion comparing these issues. Was there any information that was hard to find? Do all companies seem equally committed to social change? Given the information your students discovered, do they think that there is a serious commitment to improving the social world on multiple dimensions? Are there some problems or issues we seem more committed to solving than others?

## Engaging in Collective Behavior

**Objective:** This activity will encourage students to realize the role that collective behavior plays in their everyday lives. It will also help them make a micro- or macro-connection between what happens in their everyday lives with the larger social forces going on around them.

**Directions:** In class, go over the forms of social movements detailed in the text. Then ask students how they have been involved in these forms. Do they intend to participate in things such as fads, fashions, rumors, and mob behaviors? How did they see these activities reforming the social landscape or the social relations of others involved? Then discuss how this differs from participation in social movements. You may also find that only some students have participated in social movements, but all of us have participated in collective behavior. Lead your students in a discussion of why that is.

## Back to the Beginning

**Objective:** To encourage students to think about the effects of technology on their lives and how dependent society has become on technology.

**Directions**: Break students into small groups of four to five students. Assign each group a piece of technology and have them write about what would happen if, starting tomorrow, that particular piece of technology were banned in the United States. How would its elimination affect social, cultural, and economic arrangements in American society? For example, using the car: What adjustments would Americans have to make to effectively function in an automobile-free society? If forced, could Americans make such adjustments? What would you personally have to give up and/or change about your lifestyle to live in an automobile-free society? If you had to, could you make such adjustments? Finally, in which ways, if any, do you think American society and/or you would be better off without the automobile? In which ways would society and/or you be worse off? After your students complete the assignment, have each group present its conclusions to the rest of the class and discuss or debate their ideas. Other technologies can be broad such as the car or specific such as Facebook.

## Did You Hear the Latest . . .

**Objective:** Students will understand the effects of rumors and what purposes they might serve.

**Directions**: Have your students share any rumors that are currently going around—and that they happen to believe—while discussing the following points: What underlying social factors do these rumors have in common? Where did you first hear these rumors, and why do you believe these are true? With whom have you shared these rumors and why? Why do you think people like to spread rumors? In what ways do rumors differ from gossip? Whether we are talking about rumors or gossip, what harm or damage can be done? Which groups of people are most likely to be hurt by them? Finally, what can be done, if anything, to reduce the numbers of rumors and/or amount of gossip in our society?

## The Impact of the Internet

**Objective**: Students will realize the impact the Internet has had on our society.

**Directions**: Assign the students to groups of four or five. Ask them to imagine what would happen if the Internet disappeared today. Have each group answer the following questions:

1. How would this change the way you conduct research for papers while in college?
2. What impact would this have on businesses and the way they operate?
3. How would this change the way people communicate?

Have each group report its answers to the class and hold a discussion regarding this issue.

## Social Change in Action

**Objective**: Students will learn about social movements and social change by designing a movement to address an issue on campus.

**Directions**: Have students come to consensus on an issue on campus that they believe needs to be changed. Break students into groups and have them design a movement to accomplish the change. What is their ultimate goal? How will they garner support? How will they get their message out? What opposition do they think they will face? Who would be a good leader for their movement? Students can even design a slogan or logo to capture their ideas for social change.