**Analyzing Economic Inequality**

**Subject area/course:** Social Sciences, Introduction to Sociology

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**INSTRUCTOR PROCEDURES**

1. **Task overview:**

After completing the units in the textbook on inequality, students conduct secondary source research on theories of poverty and economic inequality. Students must find and read at least three academic articles that relate to three theories of poverty. Then, students select either the federal minimum wage law or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families for analysis. The application of theories to a social policy and the construction of a well organized, well written, and reasoned essay are at the heart of this assignment. Solid analysis is crucial to success for this written assignment.

1. **Prior knowledge required:**

Students should be able to:

* Read, comprehend, and understand college level readings, including the comparison of different author’s interpretations.
* Describe and apply concepts/theories to their topics in their essay.
* Properly use and cite sources.
* Write an argumentative essay.
* Use computer word processing software.

1. **Common Core State Standards aligned to this task:**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/2/) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/3/) Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/6/) Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/8/) Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/9/) Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/10/) By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

1. **Time requirements**:

Plan about 4 weeks for this assignment. During week 1, students will complete the course unit readings. In weeks 2 and 3, students will conduct sociology journal and social policy research. Students will write their papers during week 4.

1. **Instructor materials to use during administration**:

* Course textbook
* JSTOR or Sociology Journals
* One potentially helpful article for instructor use:
  + Bradshaw, Ted. “Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development.”
  + *RUPRI Rural Poverty Research Center Working Paper* #06-05, February 2006. Web. 31 March 2014.

1. **Instructor procedures during administration:**
   * Hand out the task, read and explain it in class, and allow time for student questions.
   * Tell students that they can discuss the assignment with you at any time.
   * Students should turn in a paper and digital copy of their essay.
   * After papers are turned in, lead a class discussion about the project.
2. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer- or teacher-edit of their papers before final submission.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend class time in review of what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work time.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Students could present the results of their research to the class via an oral or multi-media presentation.
* If there is a particularly interesting and/or controversial topic, a debate could be organized where students choose sides on the topic and defend their views.

1. **Scoring and assessment considerations:**

EPIC developed the *College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric* to accompany this task. If your school or department uses a standardized rubric that would fit the content and requirements of this task, you may choose to use your existing rubric. The following notes and suggestions are meant to clarify the intent of the rubric and include considerations for the assessment of student work.

* When assigning the task, provide students with the rubric that will be used to score their final product and discuss it as a class.
* Unlike some rubrics, the *CCR Task Bank Rubric* does not predetermine “point values” for the scoring criteria. The rubric thus allows for flexibility with different instructors’ scoring systems and individual determination of the “weight” of each criterion.
* Student work that scores at the *Accomplished* level is considered to be entry-level college work.
* The *Exceeds* category on the rubric provides an example of how a student can go above and beyond the *Accomplished* level. These examples are intended to be only ONE way a work product can exceed expectations, thus allowing room for your professional judgment.
* If needed, consider including task-specific criteria as an additional scoring category to the rubric or providing a checklist of requirements for the task.