



sustainability unit one



ask

What is progress?

acquire

- student handouts
- articles
- online websites/internet access
- PowerPoint

explore

- What is progress?
- OECD regional well-being
- Neoliberalism versus progressive economics

analyze

- article analysis
- millennium development goals

act

- write a letter to a politician

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

This lesson will help students to discover the meaning of progress and examine well-being in various countries around the world, including Canada, Venezuela, and Norway. Students will compare and contrast the neo-liberal view to that of progressive economics and compare these ideologies to the Scandinavian Model and the Bolivarian Model. Finally, students will create a model of progress for Canada and share this model with a government official in the form of a letter.

subjects: Geography, Economics, Mathematics, Civics

timing: **Activity 1**

What is Progress? | **45–60 minutes**

Activity 2

Examining differing philosophies for the creation of progress—
Progressive Economics versus neo-liberalism. | **75 minutes**

Activity 3

Comparing progress in different countries | **75 minutes**

Activity 4

Writing a political letter | **45 minutes of homework**

learning goal

- To understand the neo-liberal and progressive mindsets and their impact on the progress of society.
- To gain a better understanding of how progress/well-being is measure and how the well-being in your region compares to other places around the world.
- To develop a personal opinion of what progress is and how it should be measured.
- To share a personal opinion with a political official.

success criteria

- Students will be able to create a model of progress for Canada and share this model with a government official in the form of a letter.

ask

- What is progress?
- How is progress measured?
- What is the difference between neo-liberalism and progressive economics?
- Which policy (neo-liberalism or progressive economics) can be seen in Norway, Venezuela and Canada?
- Which policy (neo-liberalism or progressive economics) is more likely to promote the factors of well-being that you value most in society?

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

acquire

Activity 1

“Politics and Progress” PowerPoint

Handout 1 “What is Progress?”

Internet access for websites:

- OECD Regional Well Being: www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/index.html
- If it were my home: ifitweremyhome.com

Activity 2

“Politics and Progress” PowerPoint

Handout 2 “Prompts to Record your Thinking?”

Video: Nordic Model versus the Bolivarian Alliance

Articles:

- Neoliberalism: www.globalissues.org/article/39/a-primer-on-neoliberalism
- Progressive economics: www.scribd.com/doc/131793272/Progressive-Thinking
- After I Lived in Norway, America Felt Backward. Here’s Why. A crash course in social democracy: www.thenation.com/article/after-i-lived-in-norway-america-felt-backward-heres-why

Activity 3

“Politics and Progress” PowerPoint

Handout 3 “Comparing Progress in differing countries”

Internet access for websites:

- Millennium Development Goals: mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx
- TED Talk Bjorn Lomborg
blog.ted.com/2013/10/02/have-we-made-any-progress-since-2005-bjorn-lomborg-updates-his-classic-ted-talk-in-a-new-talk-at-ted-hq

Articles:

- Census Figures Show Reduction in Poverty in Venezuela over Last Decade
venezuelanalysis.com/news/7644
- Stephen Harper’s address to the UN
www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/09/25/read_stephen_harpers_address_to_the_un_general_assembly.html
- Making Real Change Happen, Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament of Canada
speech.gc.ca/en/content/making-real-change-happen

Activity 4

“Politics and Progress” PowerPoint

Handouts:

- Writing a political letter.
- How to write a political letter.
- Rubric: Evaluation of a letter to a government official.

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

explore

Please Note: The PowerPoint designed for this lesson is used in each of the four activities. If you are not using all of the activities, please refer only to the slides that relate to your activity.

Activity 1 | What is progress?

This lesson will help students to discover the meaning of progress and examine well-being as measured by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in various countries around the world, including Canada, Venezuela, and Norway.

Step one: Define progress

1. Ask the class to define in their own words “progress.”
2. Discuss the formal or official definition:
 - A forward or onward movement (as to an objective or to a goal).
 - The gradual betterment; especially the progressive development of humankind.Source: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/progress
3. Ask the class...
“How does this definition relate to current society?”

Step Two: Brainstorming Group Task

In groups of 2–3 brainstorm:

1. What are the factors by which you measure your own progress?
2. What are the factors of measuring progress in society today?
3. Who determines what those factors are?
4. How does the measurement of progress relate to how you evaluate your daily life?
Try to explain any similarities and/or differences.

Step Three: Examine OECD Regional Well-being

1. Explain to the class what the OECD Regional Well-Being site is. You may read the description below taken from the “OECD Regional Well Being: A users’ guide” available at: <http://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/assets/downloads/Regional-Well-Being-User-Guide.pdf>

Where people live matters for their well-being. Quality of life is shaped by a multitude of material and non-material dimensions, ranging from income and jobs to health and environment, among others. Outcomes in each dimension vary greatly not only from one country to another, but also within countries. The mix between different well-being dimensions is unique to each community where people live, study, work and connect. Improving people’s lives requires making where they live a better place.

Understanding people’s level of well-being and its determinants is crucial to gear public policies towards better achieving society’s objectives. As many of the policies that bear most directly on people’s lives are local or regional, more fine-grained measures of well-being will help policy-makers to enhance the design and targeting of policies. They can also empower citizens to demand place-based policy actions that respond to their specific expectations and, in turn, to restore people’s trust.

The OECD publication *How’s life in your region?* builds on the Better Life Initiative, that measures well-being at national level, as well as on the work carried out on regional inequalities through *Regions at a Glance*. *How’s Life in your region?* provides:

- a conceptual framework for measuring well-being in regions and cities;
- a common set of internationally comparable indicators of well-being and a critical assessment of the statistical agenda ahead;
- guidance to policy-makers at all levels on the use of well-being metrics for improving policy results.

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

2. Have students visit the website www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/index.html using a school computer lab, personal devices, or at home.
3. Ask students to check out what well-being is like where you live.
4. What parts of the world does your well-being compare to?
5. What are some of the similarities the two regions share?
6. What are some of the differences?
7. Were you surprised by any of the regions that related to your home? Why or why not?

Activity 2 | Examining differing philosophies for the creation of progress—progressive economics versus neo-liberalism.

Students will compare and contrast the neo-liberal view to that of progressive economics. This will then be compared to the Scandinavian Model and the Bolivarian Model.

1. Have the class prepare for the discussion by reading the following articles on Neoliberalism and Progressive Economics. For each article they should answer one question from two to three of the categories given on the handout “How do I record my thinking?” Tell the class to be prepared to discuss your interpretations and thoughts with the class. Students will use the links below to investigate these two viewpoints.

Neoliberalism

www.globalissues.org/article/39/a-primer-on-neoliberalism

Progressive Economics

www.scribd.com/doc/131793272/Progressive-Thinking

2. Have a quick class take up of the articles discussing five to eight discussion prompts chosen by the class.
3. Give an overview of the History of Progressive Economics and Neo-liberalism.
4. Discuss with the class:
 - Which of these two philosophies contains the areas that you felt needed to be considered when measuring progress?
 - How would each of these two philosophies measure the progress of Canada, Norway and Venezuela?
 - Watch the video clips Comparing the Norwegian Model to the Bolivarian Alliance (Knot Thonstad LO, Jon Erik Dølvik - FAFO, ALBA/Inter-America Development Bank)
 - Read the Article 3 “After I lived in Norway, America felt backward. Here’s Why”

Ask students to explain:

1. Which philosophy do you see driving the progress of Norway? Venezuela?
2. How are the two philosophies similar and different?
3. How has this philosophy benefitted and/or hindered the society of each country?
4. How do the models proposed compare to Canada?
5. Are there any ideas that you feel have merit for progressing Canadian society? Any ideas that would hinder Canadian progress?

analyze

Activity 3 | Comparing progress in Different Countries

Students will compare the progress and how it compares in countries that have different viewpoints on how to obtain progress (neo-liberalism versus progressive economics).

Step 1: Article Analysis

Read the article provided:

Poverty versus Progress: Comparing the US and Venezuela

www.globalresearch.ca/poverty-versus-progress-comparing-the-us-and-venezuela/5321055

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

1. Which mindset do these two regions employ?
2. What are the social effects?

Read the article provided:

Census Figures Show Reduction in Poverty in Venezuela over Last Decade
venezuelanalysis.com/news/7644

1. How has Venezuela's approach to measuring progress affected their society?
2. Which model do Canada and Norway follow?
3. What are the implications of this on their society?

Step 2: A closer look at Canada

What about Canada?

Read Stephen Harper's address to the UN.

www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/09/25/read_stephen_harpers_address_to_the_un_general_assembly.html

and The 2015 Speech From the Throne speech.gc.ca/en/content/making-real-change-happen

1. How has the philosophy of the Canadian government changed?
2. How may these differing beliefs affect progress in Canada?
3. How well do you feel Canada is achieving the goals that are outlined in PM Harpers' address?

Step 3: Millenium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

Define MDGs with the class. Have students examine the data:

1. Divide the class into eight equal groups and assign each group one of the millennium goals to examine.
2. Use the website below and examine the progress of Canada, Norway and Venezuela for your assigned goal.
mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx
3. Make three conclusions about the data you observed.
4. What questions did this date raise in your mind?
5. Share your findings with the class.
6. Respond to the findings of the other groups by comparing their findings to those of your group and answering the following reflective questions:
"Describe the life of a child growing up in Canada in comparison to one of the other two countries. Consider the factors that might influence your behaviour and experiences. Include your feelings, beliefs and assumptions as well as any factual information you have been given."

Step 4: Final Food for Thought

Have the class watch a TED Talk by Bjorn Lomborg

blog.ted.com/2013/10/02/have-we-made-any-progress-since-2005-bjorn-lomborg-updates-his-classic-ted-talk-in-a-new-talk-at-ted-hq

Questions for discussion:

- Has the world made any progress?
- What would you spend the money on and why?
- Why are these choices hard to make?

U1L3 | Politics and Progress

act

Activity 4 | Writing a Political Letter

Students will create a model of progress for Canada and share this model with a government official in the form of a letter.

Given what you have learned about measuring progress answer the following question in a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada:

Economic progress is one way to measure the progress of a country. Some people think there are other factors. How should Canada be measuring the progress of our nation? What other factors should be considered?

In your letter you may support the ideology of the current government or you may oppose it. You should also explain a minimum of three criteria you feel are the best indicators of progress.

Note: A good follow up to this lesson is the GIS lab found at the end of the curriculum document.

references

Census Figures Show Reduction in Poverty in Venezuela over Last Decade. (2013, January 25). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from venezuelanalysis.com/news/7644

Jones, A. (January 28, 2016). [After I Lived in Norway, America Felt Backward. Here's Why.](#)

The Nation (online). Retrieved February 24, 2016, from www.thenation.com/article/after-i-lived-in-norway-america-felt-backward-heres-why

Government of Canada. (2016). [Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament of Canada.](#) Retrieved Feb. 24, 2016 from speech.gc.ca/en/content/making-real-change-happen.

Lomborg, B. (2013, October 2). Have we made any progress since 2005? Bjorn Lomborg updates his classic TED Talk in a new talk at TED HQ. Retrieved February 18, 2015, from blog.ted.com/2013/10/02/have-we-made-any-progress-since-2005-bjorn-lomborg-updates-his-classic-ted-talk-in-a-new-talk-at-ted-hq

Martinez, E., & Garcia, A. (n.d.). [CorpWatch : What is Neoliberalism?](#) Retrieved February 18, 2015, from www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=376

Poverty versus Progress: Comparing the US and Venezuela. (2013, January 29). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.globalresearch.ca/poverty-versus-progress-comparing-the-us-and-venezuela/5321055>

[Read Stephen Harper's address to the UN General Assembly | Toronto Star.](#) (2014, September 25). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/09/25/read_stephen_harpers_address_to_the_un_general_assembly.html

Shah, A. (2010, August 22). A Primer on Neoliberalism. Retrieved February 18, 2015, from www.globalissues.org/article/39/a-primer-on-neoliberalism

Venezuela. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/171.htm

Yates, A., & Bartley, A. (2012, January 1). Progressive Thinking. Retrieved February 18, 2015, from www.scribd.com/doc/131793272/Progressive-Thinking