

Lesson 4

The role of the Urban League of Portland in vocational education

Purpose & Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to make explicit the link between accessibility to job training and a higher standard of living. Though this is not always the case, people that are highly skilled are able to find careers that provide them with higher pay and more benefits. The Urban League of Portland recognized that simply providing equality in public education would not be enough to assure that African Americans were able to find good paying jobs. The response of the Urban League of Portland was once again to “uplift” their own community by making sure that there was access to training for skilled professions for African Americans. This lesson follows the lesson on the struggle to provide equal educational conditions for K-12 students in Portland.

Goal: Learn about the efforts to increase economic opportunity for African Americans in Oregon

Lesson Objectives:

- Examine the link between vocational training and a higher standard of living.
- Research specific efforts of the Urban League to improve access to vocational training.

Time Needed: 60 minutes (may be extended or modified for shorter class periods)

Materials:

- “*Find your match*” slips, cut apart
- *Handout: Urban League Newsletter Excerpts*
- Computers or other internet access
- White board or document camera for showing questions and prompts

Background knowledge or skills students need prior to lesson. Students will need to have some very basic knowledge that there was a movement for desegregation and equality in employment (the Civil Rights Movement) on the part of African Americans during the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Hook or Introduction (10 min):

1. Pre-teach Vocabulary
2. “Find your match” – students will be given either a vocabulary term or a definition on a slip. They will then find their match and stand with that person. During the searching phase the teacher should circulate and guide students if needed so that all pair up correctly. If class is uneven in numbers, the teacher can be holder of the spare slip. There are enough slips for a class of 30.
3. After everyone has found their match, each pair will read their term and definition. Refer to key below.

Professional	Person that works in a career which requires a high degree of skills or training, examples: doctor, lawyer, teacher
Blue collar	Adjective describing a person that does manual labor or a job that consists of manual labor or work in a factory
White collar	Adjective describing a person who works in an office/managerial job, or a job that is in office/management
Higher Education	Education that takes place after high school. College or university level education.
Vocation	Career that a person is drawn to and has training for
Standard of Living	The amount of income, wealth, and comfort someone has
Service Industry	Work that involves providing a service rather than a product. Currently many jobs in this type of field are not well paying
Domestic Service	Employing people to work in a household on activities such as cooking and cleaning
Intern	Someone that receives on the job training in a white-collar profession. Often does unpaid work and is not guaranteed employment after internship ends.
Discrimination	Treating people unfairly because they belong to certain group
Equal access	The opportunity to access the services of an institution such as school, government, or public business or enter a career is equal for everyone
Manual Labor	A job which consists of physical work
Apprentice	Someone learning skills of a trade on the job through a program which will assure employment in the trade later (examples: licensing or guild admission)
Workforce	People that are working or available to work in a certain area
Labor union	Group that represents workers in a certain industry or field and often negotiates disputes with employers. Membership in this group is sometimes required to work in the profession.

Instruction (45 min):

1. Teacher will ask students to provide examples of jobs or careers and write responses on a document to project or white/chalk board. After getting a list of about ten occupations, the teacher should pick a few to detail the training required after high school in order to get that type of job. (5 min)
2. Have students do a quick Internet image search using the phrase “African Americans working” on their smart phone or on computers if available. Teacher will ask students to verbally share what they found by answering the following questions: What sorts of jobs were being done by African Americans in the older pictures? How does this compare to the types of jobs in the newer pictures? (10 min)
3. This search will provide a segue into the lack of jobs and vocational training opportunities for African Americans historically. In the early 1900s a large proportion of African Americans in Portland worked as domestic servants. Many skilled jobs required union membership and/or apprenticeships that were not attainable for African Americans. Other jobs were similarly out of reach when African Americans could not obtain the training required for jobs that could improve their standard of living. Tell the class that they will be looking at the efforts of the Urban League of Portland to increase vocational training, and thus job opportunities for African Americans.
4. In groups of three students, will read *Handout 1: Urban League Newsletter Excerpts* and take notes on the efforts of the Urban League of Portland to provide vocational training and vocational training opportunities in the past. (15 min)

5. Have students explore the Urban League of Portland website. They should click on the links for the different parts of the “Workforce Program” (<http://ulpdx.org/programs/workforceprogram/>) (PDF: [Workforce Programs Portland Urban League.pdf](#)) and then take notes on what they read about current efforts of the Urban League to assure access to vocational training (10 min)
6. Call on students to report what they learned about the Urban League of Portland’s work to increase vocational education for African Americans. (5 min)

Closure: 5 minutes

- Students will write an exit slip in response to the following prompt: “How important is equal access in vocational education to support equal access to jobs that allow a higher standard of living? How did the Urban League help to assure vocational education opportunities for African Americans?”

Assessment of Student Learning:

The student exit slips will serve as a formative assessment in this lesson. Student responses should include information on the strong link between training and higher paying jobs, and thus higher standards of living. They should also discuss specific methods or actions used by the Urban League of Portland to help with the lack of access to vocational training.

Modifications and Extensions:

For students that have barriers to learning such as students on IEPs or English Language Learners, the information from the Urban League of Portland website could be printed. The teacher could then highlight what the student should take notes on in particular or have the student highlight important information rather than writing notes. The same approach could be taken for *Handout 1: Urban League Newsletters*. For academically gifted students or for those students adept at Internet research, have them do their own Internet search to find news stories about the Urban League of Portland providing job/vocational training. They should include that information in their response to the exit slip prompts.

Supplementary Materials/Handouts:

Find Your Match Slips (cut on dotted lines)

Professional (noun)	Person that works in a career which requires a high degree of skills or training, examples: doctor, lawyer, teacher
Blue collar	Adjective describing a person that does manual labor or a job that consists of manual labor or work in a factory
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Handout: Urban League of Portland Newsletter Excerpts, Dec. 1956

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

The publication of INTERRACIAL PROGRESS has been suspended for the month of December for budgetary reasons. But in order that members may be informed on some recent developments of interest, we take this means of reporting to you on agency highlights.

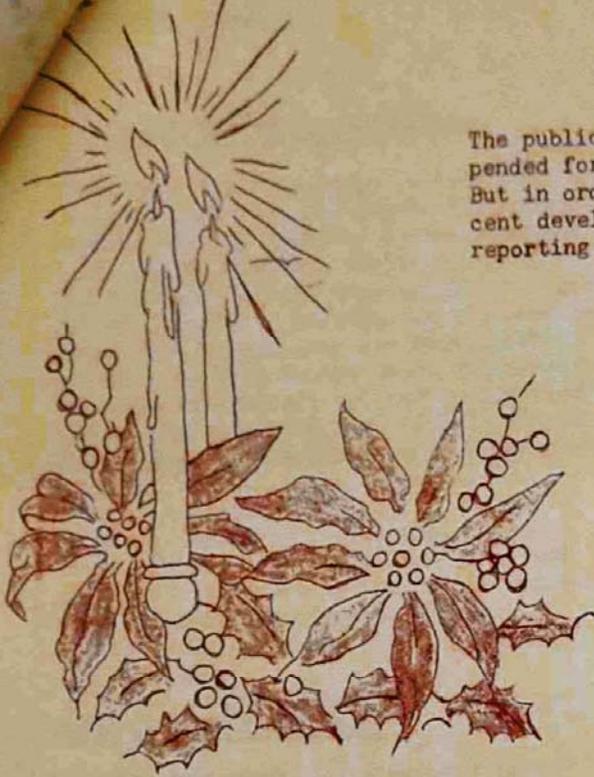
for the clearance and replacement of dilapidated and out-worn areas of the city. An Urban Renewal office has just been set up locally, with a new executive, John Kenward, and staff of assistants.

URBAN LEAGUERS ELECTED

Members will be interested to know that a brilliant list of Urban League members were elected or reelected to public office in the November elections. They included Robert Holmes, governor of Oregon; Mrs. Edith Green, U. S. Representative; Terry Schruck, mayor of Portland; Mrs. Jean Lewis and Alfred Corbett, state senators; Si Cohn, county clerk; Alfred Sulmonetti, circuit judge; and Vernon Cook, Shirley Field and Don Willner, state representatives. Francis Lambert, who was appointed by the county commissioners to replace Schruck as sheriff, has also been an Urban League member for some time. The League congratulates and wishes each of them a successful experience in the service of our state and nation.

STENOS, TYPISTS SOUGHT

Shelly Hill, director of industrial relations, has again issued a call for stenographers and typists to register with the Urban League. He reported a rash of requests, which he has been unable to fill, for persons with these qualifications. Those in need of training, or additional training, in order to qualify, are also invited to come in and see him for counseling on this matter



PRESS RECEPTION AT KAMM HOUSE

Urban League Board Member Peter Gantenbein was host for a reception at the Kamm House on November 15, when representatives of the local press, radio and TV were invited in to meet our new executive, Bill Boone, and learn something of Urban League plans in the field of housing. Joining in the informal chats were the other members of the office staff and members of the Urban League housing committee. Helpful hints on promoting our program through the mass communications media were forthcoming.

HOLLEY ON URBAN RENEWAL GROUP

Community Services Secretary John S. Holley was appointed in November to the Mayor's Advisory Council on Urban Renewal, and has attended one meeting with this group. Chaired by Albert Fonder, this important committee has a major responsibility for making recommendations