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| CHALLENGE AND CHANGE – 4u  subGROUPS of acton h.s. – an intro toethnography |

***Ethnography –*** (ethnos = folk, people, nation; graphos = I write)

Ethnography is the study of **people and cultures**. It is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group. Ethnographic research involves exploring **social phenomena** (e.g. like the formation of social groups within a school) rather than testing hypothesis. This type of social research analyzes data by interpreting the meanings of human actions. Ethnographic research describes the culture of a group in a very detailed and complex manner. An ethnography can be about an entire group, or a subpart of it.

Ethnography involves extensive fieldwork where data is collected mainly through interviews, symbols, artifacts, and observations.

Ethnographic researchers look for patterns in a group’s mental activities (ideas and beliefs expressed through language or other activities), and how they behave in their groups through their actions that the research observed.

***So, let’s conduct ethnographic research in the context of Acton High School…***

It is almost impossible to avoid being categorized into some kind of social group – especially in high school!  Have you ever taken a step back and tried to view how/why various groups in the school get formed and how they are stratified?

This assignment is an exercise in sociology and anthropology. You will use social stratification to understand (and explain) how and why the high school divides and places different people into social groups.

***Since we’re studying groups, let’s work in groups…***

1. Identity a minimum of **5-6 social groups** within our school. Then, provide each group with a **label** (one that is considerate of the human beings in that group).

***Then, create ethnographic profiles for each of your groups (a minimum of 1-2 per group member)***

2. Who is (not) in the group… I don’t mean names, I mean what are the characteristics of the people who belong to these groups?

* *Group norms, behaviours, expectations of its members, how are members expected to conform?*
* *Values:* What do members of the group think is right, good, important, or desirable? What fashion styles do they prefer? What music do they listen to? What are their attitudes towards school? Authority? What are their ambitions and goals?

3. Devise or find a **cultural artifact** (e.g., a symbol) that represents your social group(s).

4. Arrange the groups **hierarchically** according to their **power** within the school (this doesn’t necessarily need to be represented as a pyramid – it could be cyclical).

5. What **prejudices** exist between the groups?

*Prejudice*: learned prejudgment about members of social groups to which we don’t belong; prejudice is based on limited knowledge or experience with the group – simplistic judgments and assumptions are projected onto those in that group.

6. Apply ***Realistic Group Conflict Theory*** (see your Robbers Cave purple reading)

(i) What **friction**(s) occurs between these groups? Provide detailed examples if you can.

(ii) What things **led** to these frictions (e.g., traditions within the school)? Again, provide examples.

(iii) What **resources** are these groups competing for within the school that may give rise to hostility?

7. **Final Product**

Ethnographers present (share) their work with the world either in text, in graphics, or using both.

Your group will do **both**.

***Each group must decide the format in which it will present its findings to other groups***

(such as: weebly, ppt/google presentation, a dramatic presentation (with accompanying written report), video, etc.

*Be creative! … no essays please!*

***Consider***:

* Using photos, pictures, symbols, and/or objects that represent the social groups

Over the next day or so, find time to conduct your research. Have a good, long walk around your school and see your school population through an observer’s (a researcher’s) perspective.

One very clever approach to this project involved a student of mine drawing parallels between the school’s social groups and each of the 6 characters from the tv show Friends. Each character has distinct characteristics (e.g. Joey – male, a bit of a womanizer, athletic/jock) which mirrored the groups that were identified. I’m trying to stir your own creative juices – so please don’t copy this same idea!

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| **Groups will share their ethnographies during seminar**  **on October \_\_\_\_\_\_.** |

**How you will be marked:**

You will not receive a group mark – so you cannot ride on someone’s coat tails for this project.

You will be marked for your own ethnographic portrayals of 2 groups – and how well it meshes with the group as a whole (in other words, everyone’s social groups must ‘speak’ to each other).