The Unintended Consequences of Desegregation

NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops for School Teachers
Submitted by Mark Higginbotham

Guiding Questions

- When do your actions produce unintended consequences?
- What are the unintended consequences of desegregation?

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s by identifying the importance of Brown v. Board of Education decision, and how there was a long road to implementation of this Landmark case.
- Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of life and events in the United States.
- Develop the skills needed to defend a position with specific evidence in a Socratic Seminar format.

West Virginia Next Generation Common Core Standards

- SS.11.C.1 Compare and contrast various citizens’ responses to controversial government actions and debate decisions.
- SS.11.C.3 Evaluate court cases essential to fundamental democratic principles and values.
- SS.11.H.CL6.1 Examine and identify the foundations of the Civil Rights Movement through the documents and Supreme Court decisions.
- SS.11.H.CL.6.2 Investigate and cite examples of intolerance, prejudice, persecution, discrimination, and segregation.
- SS.11.H.CL.6.3 Debate the role of activists for and against the Civil Rights Movement.
- SS.11.H.CL.4 Design a timeline of Civil Rights Movement in the United States that includes key people, places,
- SS.11-12.L.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.
- SS.11-12.L.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.
- SS.11-12.L.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.
SS.11-12.L.5 Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of text contribute to the whole.

Background

The 1896 Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* upheld racial segregation as constitutional provided public facilities were equal. Unfortunately, separate public facilities were not equal. In fact, the most obvious example of racial inequality were public schools. For example, white schools had nice buildings with fully shelved libraries, running water, lockers, large classrooms and other incentives for learning. Unfortunately, black schools contained small classrooms, lacked a proper cooling and heating system, outdoor toilets, and textbooks with pages torn out. Furthermore, classes were held in tar-paper shacks.

In 1951, the struggle over desegregation had its origins in Farmville, Virginia. Sixteen-year-old Barbara Johns led a student strike at Robert Russa Moton High School. Students protested the conditions of their school be walking out. The objective of the strike was to persuade the Board of Education to build them a new school that offered the same educational opportunities as the white school.

The 1951 student led strike would become a part of the Landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. Although the nation’s highest court ruled schools must be desegregated, several states resisted. In fact there was a great deal of massive resistance among citizens and elected officials.

Preparation and Resources

DVD *Strike! A Call To Action*.

Worksheet 1: Images and free-write of Farmville and Moton schools

Oral History John Stokes interview.

Worksheet 2: Supreme Court Analysis of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Worksheet 3: From the West Virginia Archives: *School Integration in West Virginia*.


Article *Remember The Titans And The Civil Rights Movement*.

Socratic Seminar Rubric.
Lesson

Since my school is a New Tech Project Based Learning School this lesson is part of my Civil Rights Project. This lesson will take three days to complete. The culminating activity is a Socratic Seminar. Buffalo High School is on the ninety-minute Block Schedule.

Introduction – 10 Minutes (Day 1)

➢ Have students work with a partner in which he or she shares with a partner the following question. “When did a particular action on your part produce an unintended consequence?” Ask for volunteers to share his partner experience. The teacher will also share a personal experience.

Activity 1 - 15 Minutes.

➢ Analyze Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court Case. Answer the following questions from the case.
   o What is the background of the case?
   o What is the constitutional issue?
   o Who was the Chief Justice
   o What was the voting margin?
   o What is the legal constitutional impact of the decision?

Activity 2 - 15 Minutes.

➢ Study and compare the photographs of auditorium of Farmville High School to the one at Moton High School. Answer the following questions from the photograph analysis worksheet.
   o Use the chart to describe the people, objects, and activities in the chart.
   o Association: Based on what you have observed, list three things you might infer from this photograph.
   o Conclusion: Using observations and prior knowledge, what conclusion might you draw from the photograph?

Activity 3 – 30 Minutes.

➢ Show the DVD “Strike, Call to Action.” Lecture and workshop on the Student strike.

Activity 4 – 15 Minutes.

➢ Write a one page journal entry in which you answer the following question: “What lessons of citizenship can we learn from the student strike at Moton High School?”
Day 2

Activity 1- 15 Minutes.

- Analyze Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court Case Analysis Worksheet. Answer the following questions:
  - What is the background of the case?
  - What is the constitutional issue of the case?
  - Who was the Chief Justice?
  - What was the voting margin?
  - What is the constitutional impact of the decision?

Activity 2-30 Minutes.

- Power Point Presentation of Massive Resistance by Dr. Brian Daugherity of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Activity 3-20 Minutes.

- Read the Charleston Gazette September 19, 1954 article on desegregation of public schools in West Virginia. Complete Document Analysis worksheet in which students answer the following questions:
  - What is the source of the article?
  - Where was it written?
  - When was it written?
  - How does it help us learn about the past?
  - What is the purpose of the article?
  - What else would you like to know about the article?

Activity 4- 25 Minutes

- Read article by T.C. Williams. Remember The Titans and the Civil Rights Movement. Answer the following questions from the QtA Note-Making questions.
  - What do I already know about what I have read in this article?
  - What does the author directly or specifically tell me in the article?
  - Can I draw any personal connections to the article?
  - What inferences can I make?
  - Do my inferences agree with or disagree with what I already know?
  - What do I still wonder about after reading this article?

Day 3- Culminating Activity. Socratic Seminar.

- My students will have prior experience participating in a Socratic Seminar. The following are a list of possible questions for the Socratic Seminar.
- What are some of the unintended consequences of desegregation?
- What effect did desegregation have on teachers?
- What effect did desegregation have on communities?
- How did desegregation effect extra-curricular activities such as cheerleading and sports?

**Socratic Seminar Rubric**

### Conduct
- **30 Points.** Demonstrates respect for the learning process; has patience with different opinions and complexity; shows initiative by asking others for clarification; brings others into the conversation, moves the conservation forward; speaks to all of the participants; avoids talking too much.
- **25 Points.** Generally shows composure but may display impatience with contradictory or confusing ideas; comments, but does not necessarily encourage others to participate; may tend to address only the teacher or get into debates.
- **15 Points.** Participates and expresses a belief that his/her ideas are important in understanding the topic; may make insightful comments but is either too forceful or too shy and does not contribute to the progress of the conservation.

### Speaking and Reasoning
- **30 Points.** Understands question before answering; cites evidence from text; expresses thoughts in complete sentences; move conservation forward; makes connections between ideas; resolves apparent contradictory ideas; considers others’ viewpoints, not only his/her own; avoids bad logic.
- **15 Points.** Responds to questions voluntarily; comments show an appreciation for the topic; comments are logical but not connected to other speaker; ideas interesting enough that others respond to them.
- **10 Points.** Responds to questions but may have to be called upon by others; has not put much effort into preparing questions and ideas for the seminar.

### Listening
- **30 Points.** Pays attention to details; writes down questions; responses take into account all participants; demonstrates that his/she has kept up; points out faulty logic respectfully; overcomes distractions.
- 15 Points. Generally pays attention and responds thoughtfully to ideas and questions of other participants and the leader; absorption in own ideas may distract the participant from the ideas of others.
- 10 Points. Appears to find some ideas unimportant while responding to others; may have to have questions or confusions repeated due to inattention; takes few notes during the seminar in response to ideas and comments.

- **Professional**
  - 30 Points. Dresses professionally
  - 10 Points. Dresses somewhat professionally.

**Total Points Possible**  120.