



In the Struggle for Equality and Justice for All

Curriculum Unit 94.04.06
by Cynthia H. Roberts

This Unit was written for Special Education students in grades 9-12th, who are not easily motivated and who reading levels are below grade level. I am always in search of new ideals to use with them. In writing this unit, it is my wish that it will interest and motivate students in what they are learning.

In this Unit, students will study, discuss, explore, reflect, debate, write, create and expand their knowledge about themselves and the world around them.

This unit will offer students the strength of diversity the values that allows diversity to flourish, the history and literature that have shaped our country and our world. Students will also be provided with “hands on activities”. I will utilize both the cognitive and affective domains to help students internalize the similarities and differences.

The Cognitive Components of this unit are designed to increase the students ability to conceptualize and generalize about ethnically related events and to collect and evaluate data related to race and ethnicity . . . The Affective Component is designed to help students analyze and clarify their attitudes and feeling related to racial and ethnic groups and to reduce racial and ethnic prejudices.

It was about thirty years ago, when a peaceful revolution took place in the U.S., as African Americans sought equal rights. That revolution which occurred between 1954 and 1968, is called the civil rights movement.

The Civil Rights Movement has served as a catalyst for political activism among other subordinated groups in the society.

This Unit will focus on the struggle for minorities rights. It describes the civil rights movement of the late 1950's and the 1960's. It traces the roots of the movement in the second-class treatment accorded many black Americans and describes attempts to correct unfair laws and customs. This unit also points out how the civil rights movement inspired other groups, such as, farm workers and women, to combat what they too considered unequal treatment.

Students will also focus on a series of controversial decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court:

- 1) The 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, declared school

segregation unconstitutional.

2) The 1896 decision in the Plessy v. Ferguson case in regard to segregated railroad cars.

3) The decision of the Gideon case in which the court ruled that all accused people are entitled to counsel, whether or not they can pay for it.

4) The 1955 incident that sparked black protest against segregation. A black woman (Rosa Parks), refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white person as was required by law.

OBJECTIVES FOR UNIT:

- 1) Build students' awareness of ethnicity as one source of diversity within our society;
- 2) A sense of identity and personal pride;
- 3) Develop an awareness of pride in the many contributions and accomplishments of black Americans;
- 4) Encourage pride and self-confidence;
- 5) Stimulate growth and development in our society;
- 6) Encourage students to detect cultural patterns as a way of identifying commonalities.

During the 1960's Congress played a large role in changing patterns of discrimination. It passed the following laws:

1) The Civil Rights Act of 1960 provide help for any blacks who were unfairly barred from registering to vote in federal elections.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination in public accommodations (restaurants, hotels, etc.,) It declared that federal funds would be cut off from any program or activity which permitted racial discrimination. It also established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce fair employment practices.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 provided federal officers to register blacks in counties where less than one half of eligible voters took part in federal elections. It also outlawed literacy test in many states.

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 declared racial discrimination illegal in the sale of most private housing.

The 1978 decision Bakke Case, the supreme court ruled that State Universities could take race into account as one of several factors (along with academic qualifications, region, outside interest, age, etc.) in determining admission policies for its medical school.

In Griggs v. Duke Power Company, the supreme court ruled that “good intent—does not redeem employment procedures or testing mechanisms that operate as “built-in-headwinds’ for minority groups and are unrelated to measuring job capability.

In 1890 states pass the Jim Crow Laws. These laws were used to refer to the laws being passed in the South to segregate African Americans in housing, transportation, and many other aspects of daily life. These laws were enacted at a time when African Americans were finding it difficult just to earn a living. Separation, or segregation, became the law.

Many Americans became well known “names in the news” during the civil rights movement.

In this unit, I will familiarize students with the following individuals: Julian Bond; Stokely Carmichael; Eugene “Bull” Connor; Medgar Evers; James Farmer; Andrew Goodman; James Chaney; and Michael Schwerner; Fannie Lou Hammer; Cesar Chavez; James Meredith; Malcolm X; Roy Wilkins; Earl Warren; Orval Faubus; Rosa Parks; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Thurgood Marshall.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Define what is meant by the civil rights movement;
- 2) Explain the meaning of segregation and describe how, it differed in the North and the South.
- 3) Identify methods used by civil right workers to achieve their goals.

INDIVIDUALS WHO PLAYED A ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT

STOKLEY CARMICHAEL, He became a leader of the Student nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1966, he was among the first publicly to advocate “Black Power” as a means of tipping the balance against White establishment which he believed was denying African Americans their constitutional and economical rights. The power was to be expressed by political and economic pressure.

CESAR CHAVEZ, was an early leader of the CSO and a worker for civil rights. He became a strong leader in a nonviolent movement to raise the standard of living for farm workers, most of whom were Mexican Americans.

Chavez helped to organize the National Farm Worker's Association in 1962. Its members joined a strike begun by Filipinos of the Agricultural Workers' Organizing Committee (AWOC). These two groups joined the AFL-CIO as the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee (UFWOC). The UFWOC organized strikes and boycotts against large companies that grew grapes and lettuce.

EARL WARREN, under this chief justice, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional.

ORVAL FAUBUS, this Arkansas governor called out the state's national guard to prevent desegregation of a city high school.

African Americans made significant gains in their struggle for equal rights during the Reconstruction, the twelve-year period after the Civil War. The 13th amendment, adopted in 1865, abolished slavery in the United States. In 1868, the 14th amendment made former slaves citizens. It also provided that the states must grant all people within their jurisdiction "equal protection of the laws." The 15th Amendment, which became law in 1870, prohibited the states from denying people the right to vote because of their race (minority grouping). Congress, the national lawmaking body, passed several other laws to protect African American' civil rights with the Reconstruction period.

Major changes in the Civil rights Movement occurred during the 1970's. Earlier civil right efforts had involved lawsuits and other attempts to protect individual rights. The emphasis shifted from individual rights to groups that formerly had suffered discrimination.

African Americans were not the only group who were discriminated against. The Spanish-speaking people Americans wanted many of the same things—good jobs, education for the children and decent housing. The civil rights legislation of the 1960's benefited Spanish-speaking people (Chicanos, Mexican American or Hispanic Americans) as well as other minority groups.

In this unit, I want to explore the History of the Movement, using several occurrences from the civil rights Timeline.

May 17, 1954

The United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional. This ruling was made in a case known as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. This case was brought before the Supreme Court by the NAACP lawyers. By a 9-0 vote, the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). It declared that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," and that African Americans were therefore being denied the rights guaranteed by the 14th amendment.

September 1957

Little Rock Central High School is Desegregated. When nine African American students tried to enroll in high school, they were threatened by angry mobs of Whites. The governor ordered the African American students out of the school. President Dwight Eisenhower sent the U.S. army troops to Little Rock to make sure that integration was carried out.

December 5, 1955 -December 20, 1956

This 1955 incident sparked black protest against segregation. Rosa Parks, a black women, refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white person as was require by law. Her arrest led blacks in Montgomery to boycott the city buses. She chose to defy the Jim Crow tradition. Her decision inspired 17,000

African Americans and Martin Luther King, Jr. to boycott the city buses.

May 6, 1960

The Civil Rights Act is passed. Among other things, it allows judges to appoint people to help blacks register to vote.

During the 1960's African American voting rights received increased protection. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 provided for the appointment of referees to help African Americans to register to vote. The 24th amendment, adopted in 1964, barred poll taxes in federal elections. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed literacy tests in many southern states. A 1970 federal law made literacy tests illegal in all states.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

This Unit is designed to be taught a minimum of four forty eight minute periods per day for a duration of twelve to fourteen weeks. This section will provide the reading with some possible strategies which could be use as motivating factors in teaching the goals of this unit.

WEEK 1—WEEK 3

The first weeks will focus on the roots of the movement, describing the civil rights movement of the late 1950's and the 1960's. I will point out how the civil rights movement inspired other groups such as farm workers and women to combat what they too considered unequal treatment. Also I will discuss the passing of the Jim Crow Laws and their legitimation by the Supreme Court; We will also include controversial decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court.

WEEK 4—WEEK 6

This section focuses on the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which declared school segregation unconstitutional. We will trace previous Supreme Court rulings involving segregation and explore Americans reaction to *Brown* ruling.

Activity: In order for students to understand the Supreme Courts reasoning in the *Brown* decision. I will have the class pretend it is the Supreme Court hearing the case. We will review the facts of the case, making sure that students understand the key terms involved:

- 1) Segregation—separate facilities for blacks and whites was the legal system in much of the South and in some Northern and Western Communities.
- 2) Linda Brown had to travel two miles a day to an all black school when an all white school existed a few blocks from her home.
- 3) Her father sued to allow her to attend the closer white school. Having lost the suit in lower courts, he appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

At the end of class, I will allow student to reach a decision by voting. They will be reminded that the Supreme

court makes its decisions by majority rule.

WEEK 7—WEEK 10

This section will open up with well known “names in the news” during the civil rights movement.

Students will be divided up into four groups. They will be given two days to find information about as many of these people as they can. They will be asked to write down who the people are, what role they played in the civil rights movement, and what they are doing now.

Students will use the following sources: encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries, current biography, U.S. text, and books about the civil rights movements.

WEEK 10—WEEK 11

This section will examine the careers and beliefs of several individuals who contributed to the Movement. I will begin by discussing Martin Luther King, Jr. his background and describe his ideals of civil disobedience and peaceful resistance. Much of the talk will focus on his stirring “I Have a Dream” speech made during the 1963 “March on Washington

Have students analyze their feelings about King’s view through the following activity:

- 1) In a class discussion, have students arrive at a definition of unjust law.
- 2) On the basis of their definition, have them decide if any of the following are unjust:
 - 1) Segregation Laws
 - 2) A law saying all men over 18 must serve in the arm forces.
 - 3) A school rule that you must not cut any classes.

Students may like to compare their definition of an unjust law with Martin Luther King’s:

“Any law that uplifts human personality is just”.

“An unjust law is a code that any law that degrades human personality is unjust”.

VIOLENCE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS

White violence against African Americans was common in the United States, even after slavery ended. Groups of whites sometimes took African Americans from their homes to beat, shoot, or lynch them. The home was no place for protection against such violence. In fact, the home could be—and often was—burned down.

It was acceptable in many places for whites to treat blacks badly. This treatment would have been a crime if

the black victim had been white. But many local white law officers permitted these activities. The national government stood by without doing much of anything until the civil rights movements of the 1950's and 1960's began to bring about the needed changes.

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Supreme Court of the -United States has made many civil rights decisions. It sometimes makes decisions that change those made earlier. In 1896, the Court made segregation legal with Plessy v. Ferguson. In Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, the Court made segregation illegal in American schools. In 1971, the Court ruled that lower district courts could order busing to integrate public schools. So, black children could be bused to all-white public schools and vice versa. Then in 1974, the Court ruled that children could not be bused from the city to the suburbs and vice versa. In many areas, most blacks lived in the city, while many of the whites lived in the suburbs. So this decision meant that many children would continue to attend segregated schools.

LESSON # 1

OBJECTIVE:

To make students' aware of women contributions to society throughout history and of society's failure to acknowledge these contributions.

Presentation Suggestions:

After students have tried to complete the exercise on their own, complete the exercise as a group. Some names may include the following:

Explorers: Osa Johnson, Amelia Earhart, Sally Ride

Recent National Leaders: Indira Ghandi, Margret Thatcher, Queen Elizabeth II

Athletes: Billy Jean King, "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias, Wilma Rudolph

This is a good time to talk about role models and how they affect one's perception of what one can do.

Activities: A quest speaker could discuss the role of women in History. Places to locate speakers are local colleges, history departments, or women centers.

Students could read the newspaper to discover what notable women today are doing. Who are the top 10 women in today's world, in the opinion of the class?

LESSON #2

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Define what is meant by the civil rights movement;
- 2) Identify methods used by civil rights workers to achieve their goals.

In this unit, students will read about various groups of people who try to combat what they consider unfair treatment. Have students answer the following statements and questions anonymously in written form.

- 1) Describe the incident.
- 2) How did the incident make you feel?
- 3) How did you react?

As students read through the unit, they will be able to compare their feelings and reactions to those exhibited by people described in the unit.

Following Clues: Have students copy in their notebooks the following descriptions of people whom they will be able to identify later in the unit.

LESSON # 3

OBJECTIVE:

- 1) Students will identify Earl Warren;
- 2) Explain the Supreme Court decision in the Brown Case;
- 3) Discuss the various ways in which Americans reacted to the decision.

In order to understand the Supreme Court's reasoning in the Brown decision, have the class pretend they are the Court hearing the case. We will review the facts of the case, making sure that students understand the key terms involved.

- 1) Segregation
- 2) Linda Brown

To facilitate discussion, mention that the court basically has to decide one of two ways 1) segregate schools, deny blacks equal protection of laws; or 2) segregate schools, do not deny blacks equal protection of the laws as long as the separate schools are equal.

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